

The Church Ministering to Rural Life

BY B. H. CAIN, D. D.

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DEDICATION

*This volume is gladly dedicated to the
members of The Rural Life Commission
of St. Joseph Conference, Church of the
United Brethren in Christ.*

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PREFACE

There has been something unwise, unsafe and completely unchristian in the urban ideal which has altogether too much dominated our thinking in the last fifty years. We surely did not get from Jesus or the Bible or from history our ideas that success and happiness are found in ease and idleness, or pleasures or possessions, which are parts of the dream of city life.

Not only America but all the civilized world has been under the curse of the idea that the way of the good life is to buy and sell and get gain, to get the power to live on the toil of others, to sit at the place of toll and to have other people to be our ploughmen and our vinedressers.

The primary cause of the war, and the hate and the suffering of today, is this selfish, mistaken and ungodly ambition for power, this false philosophy of life that says, "Some must be masters and some must be slaves, and the fortunate and the successful are the conquerors."

There is joy in work far more than in idleness, and pleasure in production far greater than in possessions. The great are not those who conquer but those who serve. The happy are not those who have, but those who give. The climbers fall, the proud perish, and the meek inherit the earth.

The revolution that is needed is in the thinking of men. To some extent at least this revolution is going on now. We have learned something in these last ten years, and if suffering means learning we should learn more in the next ten. There is a new recognition of the failure and the fleeting nature of wealth, of the blessedness and the wholesomeness of work, of the dignity and the glory of all productive toil, and of the sin of injustice and graft and oppression. There is a new sense of the sacredness and the glory of the farmer's high privilege of working with God amid the miracles of soil and seed and sunshine and shower. There is a new discovery of the great need and opportunity for finding life and fulfillment, and of serving God, our country, and the world of tomorrow, incon-

serving soil and souls and righteousness and religion in rural communities and the rural church.

The appointment and work of rural life commissions in annual conferences, and of the Commission on Rural Life by the General Conference, are in line with a great movement that circles the globe for the building of a Christian rural culture, for maintaining and vitalizing rural religion, and for building wholesome rural communities that shall provide for plenty and peace and progress for persons and for the world.

The first Conference Rural Life Commission of the United Brethren Church was in St. Joseph Conference in northern Indiana. Dr. B. H. Cain is the Superintendent of St. Joseph Conference and has had an active and vital relationship to this work from the beginning.

This book is based upon this experience as well as the personal experience of the author as a pastor and as the superintendent of rural churches. Doctor Cain is a good organizer. He has the ability to plan, and then to get things done. Then he has the ability to write clearly of these plans and methods, and also of the philosophy and spirit that is essential to success.

Such a book as this is much needed. We need to see what we can do and how and why. It is a valuable handbook for a rural pastor and will also have value for the pastor of a city church. I commend it most heartily.

I hope that Annual Conferences will see that all rural pastors are supplied with copies. It will be a good investment. This book can well be made the text for study by groups of rural pastors and for study groups in local churches.

Such a study will pay but it will pay most if after the study as pastors and people we select one or more projects and then do the things that he says.

This book may be used as a textbook for course 611b, How to Administer the Local Church, of the Standard Leadership Curriculum, in classes where a special study of the rural church is desired.

Sincerely,

O. O. Arnold,
Chairman of Commission on Rural Life.

CHAPTER I

THE RURAL CHURCH AND OUR CIVILIZATION

As long as we maintain a wholesome rural life, the civilization of the nation will be secure. America is the primary source of freedom, independence and material and spiritual resources. Our Pilgrim Fathers developed the spirit of common brotherhood in America. Our government is based on divine principles. A divine spirit prompted and led to the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America. This invaluable document was not an overnight dream, but the matured convictions of years of Christian service and sacrifice. Wise men of old were inspired to write it. On these basic principles of our national life came religious tolerance, independence, liberty, freedom, free schools, free speech, free institutions, free press and the observance of the Christian Sabbath.

This spirit of independence was born in the fields and forests of New England and nurtured in her rural church life. The little red schoolhouse was a strong factor in producing true patriotism and loyal citizenship in America. It also provided a preaching place for many congregations until a church house could be erected. America looks to her rural interests for sustenance, food, clothing, stable manhood and leadership. Statesmen and churchmen alike are recognizing the close relationship of our national life and rural welfare. National prosperity cannot be maintained without due consideration for rural life. There is no time when government has seen the importance of rural life as today. The conservation of our national ideals and religious fervor is with rural America. The balance of power is in the country districts.

The Rural Church and National Welfare

The greatest factor in rural development is the rural church. This church must be developed as a national welfare and security. Rural America cannot develop on a commercial or an economic basis. This can be done only on a religious basis.

*"God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves?"*

—William Cowper

Nations have grown and died in the city. "When the circus became more important than the corn field, Rome perished."¹ Homes are more permanent in the country. Families die out in the city in a few generations. The rural church is the basis for all national prosperity.

American Protestantism depends largely on rural religion. For more than forty years, Protestant families in our cities have not been reproducing themselves. Catholicism in America has been decreasing in rural areas but increasing in the great cities.

Roman Catholicism has grown enormously in the United States during the nineteenth century, chiefly through immigration from Ireland and southern Germany and since 1890 from Italy and southern Europe. These races have been prolific in their new homes.²

City Protestant churches, are born, live and grow by being constantly fed by our rural churches. These rural people bring not only increased membership to the city churches, but seasoned leadership, fervor, humble spirit, resourcefulness and stability as well. The background of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ is almost 100% rural and today, after 140 years of growth and development, it is still 75% a rural church. The St. Joseph Conference of northern Indiana, one of twenty-eight Conferences in America is 77% rural. A recent survey made of six Protestant Churches in the city of Indianapolis revealed the fact that 70% of their leaders and 75% of the congregation were rural born and reared. One of the oldest and largest churches in the St. Joseph Conference having a membership of over 600, four years ago, revealed the fact that 80% of its leaders had come from the rural church and over 65% of its membership was originally from the country. Home and family religion are more vital and practical in the country. Divorces are four times more common in the city than in the rural sections. To preserve America, we must preserve and develop rural religion.

Democracy and Rural Life

The American government is a government, "Of the people, for the people and by the people."³ A government in which

¹Hoovermale—God's Will Be Done in the Community, p. 25.

²Williston Walker—A history of the Christian Church, p. 585.

³A. Lincoln—Gettysburg Address, New Students Reference Book, Vol. III, p. 1075.

the supreme power is retained by the people and exercised by representation. Many of our great congested cities have been the problems of democracy and starting places of destructive movements and uprisings. It is impossible to have a community spirit in a great city. Wealth is more concentrated and powerful in the great cities. In the cities are great masses of homeless, unemployed, discouraged and crushed folks who are a threat to democracy, however much they wish to be otherwise.

In the country we have the middle class folks, neither rich nor poor, but free and contented. These fit best into a democracy and, therefore, function best under our type of government. In a democracy people have the advantages of knowing each other, talking things over that pertain to mutual helpfulness, securing information necessary to intelligent voting and working together for the common good. He who can look back to his rural childhood community with all of its comparative limitations, has a goodly heritage. May we ever be a free people.

Rural Leadership

The rural church and the community are the source of Christian leadership. The Bible is a rural book. It opens with a garden scene. Its leaders, mighty men and women, with but few exceptions were born and reared in the open country. The great Abraham tended the flocks, the mighty Moses had a rural background, the story of the Exodus and the promised land is largely rural, Gideon was a farmer, David was reared and educated in the great out-of-doors, Ruth served as a harvest hand, the minor prophets were countrymen, John the Baptist was a desert man, Jesus was born in a stable, was a countryside preacher, was crucified by the greatest city of his day, the Apostles and practically all other New Testament leaders save St. Paul were reared in the country. The pages of history are indelibly marked with the characters and deeds of men and women whose lives had humble beginnings in the country.

In America, the great Washington and Lincoln tower head and shoulders above all others in the founding and recreating of our nation. It is so today in every field of worthy endeavor that the largest number of men and women who are wielding an influence for God and for good, were once humble country toilers. One needs but survey the field of the past and present leadership of his own and other denominations to see that but

few of them have come from great cities. The cities with their skyscrapers, bright lights, noise, tragedy and sin, produce few great saviors. To the rural church and community we must look today with anxious and prayerful hearts for leadership to "come to the Kingdom for a time like this."

Rural Opportunities

The advantages of country life over those of the city are quite evident. The open country has the best possibilities of home life, room to rear children with freedom and independence; the congested city has little or no room, many people live in flats, apartments, shacks and tenement houses; there is but little of the neighborly spirit and children are either reared with few advantages or not wanted at all. The farmer has the least contact with sin and the greatest inspiration for spiritual meditations, while the city with the glare of its bright lights, commercialized amusements, luring movies, low taverns, night clubs and the like, is constantly enticing with dastardly temptations and lusts. City life is keenly competitive; rural life is more peaceful, independent and cooperative. There are no whistles calling the farmer to and from work; no disappointing shut-downs and layoffs; he quietly and with faith in the God of the harvest, plows, sows and reaps. City life has much that is superficial, sham and pretense; in the rural communities we find simple honesty, frankness, genuineness and truth. The country furnishes the most health giving life on earth; one is close to God and nature, the air and water are pure, food is fresh from mother earth, the sun is generous with its life giving streams and rustic health abounds. The city with its smoke and dirt, in some sections, is not conducive to good health. While larger and immediate financial return may attract in the city, experience and observation teach that living is much better and cheaper in the country in the end. With all the modern conveniences of the city, "the hayseed farmer" no longer exists. He is now more up-to-date in everything, better educated, more progressive and surrounded with possibilities without number. His life is spent in the sunlight of heaven.

New Emphasis on Rural Life

The rural church is being revitalized and rebuilt. A survey of the institutions and agencies at work to revitalize and rebuild rural life will be most encouraging and stimulating.

The nation, churches and farmers are aware of rural needs and are hastening to meet them. There remains much ground yet to be possessed. Universities are establishing chairs of rural life. Dr. Mark Dawber occupies such a chair in Boston University. Seminaries are setting themselves to the task of training a type of leadership adapted to rural needs. Hartford, Illiff and Bonebrake Seminaries are pioneers in this work. Denominational home missions boards are deeply interested and aiding our rural work. Summer schools for the training of rural pastors in state and agricultural colleges have been held for ten years in 28 schools annually. State agricultural colleges of Indiana contribute \$30,000 for rural work annually.

The least a church can do, is to cooperate in sending town and country pastors to attend these schools. Some denominations have superintendents of town and country work, while others have rural life commissions functioning. Leadership training curricula are being built so as to include courses on rural work. Conferences are organizing rural life commissions to study and plan advances in rural fields. The St. Joseph Conference of the United Brethren Church, is a pioneer in this movement having had a Rural Life Commission for a dozen years which has gradually increased in efficiency and outreach until it has become the most dynamic and useful organization of the church. Other conferences of the denomination are organizing like commissions on rural life. Many lecturers are giving their time to rural life, and books are being written on rural church administration which should receive wide circulation. A new day has come to the rural church, for which we thank God and take courage.

We need to encourage other agencies right in our midst, that are making a definite contribution to the rural church. The 4-H Clubs, and the Future Farmers of America and Federal Housing Association and their leaders are doing fine work in rural activities. The Grange, Garden Clubs, Farm Bureaus, Farmers' Institutes, Short Course Classes, Extension Service of State Universities and Federal Government, the Hi-Y, Girl Reserves, and Boy and Girl Scouts, are all contributing in a fine way to our rural communities. With such added encouragement and under divine leadership, the rural church cannot fail any longer.

CHAPTER II

RURAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

A large group of church leaders today are possessed with the earnest conviction that the proper cultivation of the rural parish is one of the most challenging and promising tasks of this generation. Because of numerous changes in rural life during the recent years, it has become necessary that we face the problems of the rural church with all fairness, rigid honesty and with an open mind. Efficient administration and careful management are the means by which the much loved and sorely needed rural church, can be awakened to its golden opportunities, conserved, developed, and challenged to rise to its highest efficiency and usefulness.

Its Necessity

The rural church is needing an ever producing efficiency. Not every pastor is a good business executive. However, he is constantly called upon to organize, administer and execute in order to perform the tasks of his church. Teaching, preaching and personal ministry are not in the same field. Some pastors are unusually successful in soul-winning, others succeed in gaining the ear of the crowd, but both of these groups often fail in the work of enlisting, moulding, strengthening and co-ordinating. Today every pastor, whether in the large city or the open country, is faced with the tasks of stimulating and directing the organizations of the local church, or he may choose capable men, women and young people and place upon them the full responsibility of the church's program. If he does the work of the former, he will be a busy and sometimes fussy manager and nothing much else, while the latter task makes him a wise administrator with time to spare.

Perhaps the most important work of the pastor is to discover, train and set to work leaders in the local church. This is an old Biblical principle.¹ The opportunities of the modern rural church make it necessary for the pastor to address him-

self to the task of administration. The rural parish will not care for itself. The pastor must not do the work, but be the directing head of all church activities. The administrator must be in sympathetic understanding with his workers, cultivate the close friendship of department heads, commend them for their faithfulness and encourage them in their work. At stated intervals, he will need to see the heads of all organizations, to acquaint himself with the problems of their work and counsel them about methods by which their difficulties may be overcome and efficiency increased. The wise pastor will study his field and its needs constantly. Changing conditions must be met. The demands of successful church administration will be exacting and heavy, but will result in increased power and influence of the church. The pastor, who neglects the duties of administration will soon find his church doing inferior work, his brother pastor preaching to larger audiences, and his own heart becoming cold and critical.

Too many pastors are content with superficial work. Church tinkerers and jugglers are a failure. They soon become conference tramps. Church engineers will build organizations that will last centuries. The administrator must continue uncompromisingly at his task. Wise administration of the forces of the church is an absolute condition of success in the rural pastorate.

Objectives

Individual Salvation. The objectives of rural church administration must be in harmony with the purpose and mission of Jesus Christ. What Jesus did, the rural church must do. He "came to seek and to save that which was lost."¹ The Gospel of regeneration belongs to the rural church also. She has been entrusted with it and can do no less than be a faithful steward of the Gospel. Christianity is a new life imparted by Christ. The New Testament clearly sounds the note "Ye must be born again."² Birth is the genesis of all life. His salvation includes all peoples, in city, mountain or in quiet country. God made us all; Jesus died for all and the rural church must bring to all, within the sphere of its influence, a convincing knowledge of Jesus Christ, and complete His work. To be fully evangelized, one must make Jesus Christ both Savior and Lord.

¹Exodus 18:14-23; Numbers 11:11-17.

¹Luke 19:10.
²John 3:7.

The church, that ceases to be evangelistic, will soon cease being evangelical. The true pastor is an evangelist. The greatest task and ultimate objective of every board and organization in the local church is to so function that souls may be won to Jesus Christ by their efforts. The entire church must be constantly and deeply saturated with the evangelistic spirit as it carries on the greatest business in the whole world. The church that is not saving souls has gone out of business. Let the church concentrate its prayers and personal efforts on all the unsaved of its community, until all shall have bowed the knee unto Christ and with the mouth made confession unto salvation.

Edification. Cultural evangelism is continuous. The work of indoctrination and edification of souls must never cease. This is constructive evangelism. The church is a home for new converts and it should be organized to take care of its spiritual children and not leave them homeless and motherless. To this task the work of administration must give careful and unending attention. New converts and old alike need proper environment, direction and guidance. Herein the church has manifested a great weakness over the years.

We are not saved merely to keep out of hell or to gain heaven, but to serve. The powers and talents of new converts must be trained, developed in all kinds of Christian service. Leadership in every department of the church should be ready to give work to every age. Our leaders must be spiritual, alive and aggressive. In the local Church, Sunday school, Christian Endeavor Society, Women's Aid, Brotherhood and Missionary Societies, there is some place for every Christian to serve.

The church must provide wholesome social life for its youth and adults. If the church does not direct the work of young people, the devil will. The church must ever keep before its members the unfinished task of human redemption. Great tasks produce great souls. We can grow mushrooms overnight, but it takes years to grow a great oak. An adequate program is but suggested here: Instruction in the Word of God, public worship, regular prayer services, daily Bible study, instruction in Christian living, exercise in giving, prayer and testimony, and freely reading the church periodicals and other religious literature. The rural church will respond to a well-defined program of spiritual culture.

Active Enlistment. The rural church should be the most powerful and effective force in the community. Every member should be enlisted in active, aggressive service. God expects the church to turn its shirkers, idlers and slackers into spiritual assets. The inactive member must be rewon to Christ and the church. This will demand concern, prayer and action upon the part of the active membership. It is a serious task to mobilize every member for active service. Dr. Albert F. McGarrah says, "Ninety per cent of the church can be enlisted in active service."¹ A survey of the rural churches of St. Joseph Conference indicated that less than one-half of its rural membership is actively engaged in service. This is another task for rural church administration.

Many church people need a more adequate understanding of the purpose and program of the Christian church, its glorious history and supremacy. They must feel that the work of the church is important. Tasks assigned church people are for their own good; they produce growth, and are for the good of others who need Christ and the church. Enlistment campaigns to discover talents in the membership, the outlining of definite tasks will give work to do. Perhaps there are country roads that need to be marked, some things about church premises that need to be beautified, visiting to be done, church bulletin boards to be erected, an adult school to be promoted, a community chorus to be organized, etc. The task is to discover what ought to be done and then find workers to do it.

Fortunate is that church that finds work for its children. These tasks, though simple, train them while young. Children can bring friends to church, distribute literature, pull weeds on the church lawn (if trustees have been negligent), play in an orchestra, run errands for the pastor during week days, distribute hymn books during worship services, act as ushers and bring flowers for the pulpit. The administrator will always remember to support his workers, recognize their faithfulness and encourage them. Whatever needs to be done in a rural community by the church can be done.

Relating the Church to the Community. The problems of the community must become the problems of the church. The church exists to share, to give its very life, to serve the community. All interests of the community must be evangelized.

¹McGarrah-Modern Church Management p. 171.

Wherever there is human need, the church must help meet it. Many churches have wisely chosen the beautiful and significant motto, "In the heart of the community and the community at heart."¹ When these words are lived up to, the church will make a powerful impact upon the life of a community for good. In a figure of speech, Jesus stated the function of the church in the community, "Ye are the salt of the earth."² The church is to save the community from elements of corruption, decay and death. It is to have a preserving and a flavoring influence. Salt arrests the perishing processes and gives strength to the forces of life. Salt must come in contact with what it is to season and preserve, so the church must actually apply its teaching and service to the needs of the community.

No one particularly cares to live where there is no church or public school. Reasons are quite obvious. Where there are churches functioning, ideals are higher, life is safer, property is more valuable, people are happier and cleaner, more up-to-date and wiser. The religion of Jesus Christ has power to lift all of life to higher levels. Some of the blessings that come from having an active and militant church in the community are the church house and its services which are constant reminders of our duty to God and our fellowmen. It speaks silently and constantly of all that is noble, pure and good. The church holds up before the community the one ideal clean life in Jesus Christ and through its teaching and preaching inspires men and women, boys and girls, to undertake to live that life. The church ministers to the needs of all without discrimination, in trouble, calamity, sorrow and sickness. It is the one Good Samaritan of the community. A heartening thing in these troubled days is the fact that the church keeps before its people—"that truth and righteousness" will some day prevail upon the earth. We have our reverses, temporary defeats, setbacks, adversity and struggles, but one day "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."

Essential Needs of Rural Church Administration

There are some things absolutely necessary to the successful administration of the rural church. A brief survey of these needs is made here.

¹Titus 3:1-8; I Timothy 6:17-18.

²Matthew 5:11.

An Organized Church. One widely approved method of organization of an individual church is that of the formation and functioning of an official board. The membership of the board includes the pastor, all properly recognized ministers and deaconesses holding membership in the local church and who are not elsewhere employed, the class leader, general director of christian education, the directors of adult, young peoples and children's work, the superintendent and treasurer of the Sunday school, the president and treasurer of the adult and senior Christian Endeavor societies, the superintendent of the Intermediate and Junior Christian Endeavor societies, presidents and treasurers of the Brotherhood, the Women's Missionary Society, the Otterbein Guild and the Women's Aid Society, the church stewards, the treasurer of the current expense and benevolent funds, the local church treasurer, the financial secretary, the church and parsonage trustees.

Groups included in the organization of the church are those of the children, young people, and men and women of the church. The Sunday school is the organization almost universally established for the children's program of Christian education. There should be a separate department with officers, room and equipment for the Cradle Roll, Beginners, Primary and Juniors. Young people's groups are divided into Intermediates, Seniors and Young People. The most generally maintained organization is the Sunday school. Men's organizations should have as their purpose the enlisting, training and mobilizing of the men of the congregation in various activities. The success of Brotherhoods, Bible classes, Clubs and Associations sponsored by the men of the church depends largely upon the aims. Men's groups demand strong leadership and a definite program of activities. Women's organizations are the Aid Societies, Guilds, Missionary Societies and Clubs. Their aims are generally missionary, philanthropic, financial, spiritual and literary.

The group method of church organization is meeting with wide approval today. It is not a new method, but has been used since Israel was divided into tribes. According to this method, the parish is divided into geographical districts with a captain over each district. The district is then grouped with a leader over each group. The leaders should live within the group. Every group should have its objectives, its share of the work of the church and cooperate in carrying

out the whole program of the local church. There are many advantages to this system. Experience teaches us that it will promote all church activities, increase attendance, build up loyalty and efficiency in the work of administration.

Many people treat denominational agencies as not belonging to the local church at all. They have been organized by the denomination to carry out its work more effectively. The local church can invest its benevolent and missionary funds more wisely and economically with the help of these agencies. The general boards get the largest results from distributing these contributions. It is through these agencies that the church can preach the gospel more extensively, plant churches, establish orphanages, and plant colleges and sustain them. A large portion of the evangelistic, educational, and philanthropic work is done by these boards. The pastor, as an administrator, must be interested in all the boards of his denomination. He should be acquainted with their fields, forces and budgets. Through sermons, literature, and annual reports, he should enlighten his people, recruit workers and gather funds for these agencies.

Modern Building and Equipment. This is a modern scientific age and it is here to stay. It is the product of Christianity and not the work of the devil. The farmer now has the advantage of practically all modern conveniences, his home is modern, he travels in the modern way on paved highways and improved roads, he uses the latest and best in farm machinery for plowing, cultivating and harvesting, the gasoline engine does much of his hard work, the daily paper is brought to his door, so he keeps informed of markets and world events, farm journals supply him with up-to-date information and methods of better production, the radio supplements his reading, hucksters bring the groceries he may need while busy in the fields, the telephone and "bookmobile" are all at his service. Old equipment, however expensive, has gone the way of the scrap heap to give place to modern equipment.

Church administration must seek to make use of all new tools and equipment for the Master's service. The new department classroom, office equipment, literature, kitchen, social rooms and pastor's auto and numerous other devices should be available for the church of Jesus Christ. Where rural churches are succeeding with limited equipment, it is because its members are planning for something better in the

near future. The needs are obvious and the new things are on the way. The public school of today is much better equipped than was the college of two decades ago. Many rural communities have modern homes and the latest in public school building and equipment, while the one room church, without a basement or any teaching facilities, tries to carry on.

The church should lead the way in progress. The church should have a modern dignified building and a modern house for a parsonage. The antique parsonage has seen its day and should be replaced. It may be wise and necessary to consolidate some churches on circuits to obtain a better building, give the community more services, make less driving for the pastor and at the same time make it possible for him to do more efficient work. A church building should be adequate to meet the needs of a community. The style of building is not to be discussed here. God's house should be kept neat, clean, well ventilated, in good repair, and the church beautiful. A very encouraging trend is now here in rural church buildings. The last few years have witnessed the enlarging and modernizing of many rural churches. This adds life to their years and years to their lives.

Parish Program. Before a local church can wisely formulate and inaugurate a parish program, a community survey should be made. A survey of any rural community will reveal some startling and overwhelming facts; it will bring before the church its slighted opportunities and give it another chance to redeem itself. Surveyors perform an important and joyful ministry by contacting the homes of the community and presenting the claims of Jesus Christ and His church. The survey card should include the following items of information: name of family, number of children with names and ages, church relations and preferments, business recreation, amusements and social life. Many folks in every rural community do not use the privileges of worship and instruction which the church offers. Perhaps the church has been slow to invite them to its services. The larger the parish, the more complex the field; the more important is an accurate gathering of facts. Every local church should formulate a large program covering a period of ten years or more and adjust that program as need arises. The facts revealed by the survey will largely determine the basis of the program for that particular community and year.

Generally speaking, there are a number of things that should enter into a parish program. They may be listed as the fundamental requirements for Kingdom growth and progress; a means to an end. Spiritual culture would be the first item in a parish program. This phase of Christian education comes by way of public worship, all types of prayer, Bible study, worship in the home and sacred music. Evangelism is the vocation of every church. The church must be evangelistic in its life and activities in order to preserve itself and win the community to Christ. Christianity is a missionary religion. The church that ceases to look upon a world of need for which Christ died, with a heart of compassion, will soon die. Every church should have a well-planned program of missions. Christian education must be vital and Scriptural. The agencies through which it functions today are the Sunday school, Christian Endeavor Society, church night services, Week Day Schools of Religion and the Daily Vacation Bible school, the Women's Aid Society of the church and summer opportunities.

Perhaps no church needs to study and practice more the Christian stewardship program of the Bible than the rural church. Stewardship will revive the membership and furnish a satisfactory solution to the financial problems of the church. Each church will have a financial program to put over during the year. This should be well-planned and provided.

Christianity is a social religion. The program will need to provide for clean, wholesome social life and fellowship for all ages of the church. The rural church must make much use of publicity. That may seem strange to folks in the open country. Some churches are not marked as to denominational affiliations, others have no bulletin boards announcing hours of service and place of pastor's residence. Many rural churches now have the Sunday church bulletin, directories and special bulletins at intervals. The building and grounds are the silent advertisements for the church that speak of its inner heart and life, of the membership.

A Strong Working Force. Efficiency in the church cannot be expected as long as less than one-half of its members are in active service. Routine work belongs largely to the laymen, while the pastor gives himself to the educating of leaders and directing the work. Of the Official Board we expect action, there is of course that large unofficial majority, which also

must have work to do. The success of the local church will depend largely upon the Official Board. Unless it gets behind the program of the church, the work done will be both difficult and inefficient. It is the function of the Board to assume the entire responsibility of the church. Board members must manifest interest in worship, prayer meetings, finances, Sunday school and fellowship of the church. The Board is responsible for something definite being done in every department of the church. Through the Official Board, all departments of the church are bound together. Responsibility should be so placed as to prevent concentration of power. Generally speaking, one office in the church and that well served is enough for anyone. A distribution of responsibility will give more people work to do and it will be done more efficiently. Offices should not be considered merely as honors bestowed, but as opportunities for service.

The pastor's relation to the Official Board should be one of wise leadership, cooperation and fellowship. Attendance at all meetings of the Board should be held as highly sacred and binding upon its members. The Board must formulate programs and set them in action, set goals, and transact all the business of the church. The Board does not always include all its officials as members; there are a lot of minor, but very important offices in the church. Every church should have a large volunteer force of workers ready for any emergency. There is work for all and all can work.

The Every Member Canvass for church funds comes regularly every year in a designated month. Extra help will be needed by the Finance Committee to gather in the claims of the church, before the Annual Conference convenes in September. With the opening of the new conference year, a loyalty campaign and rally day will demand visitation and re-enlistment. The summer slump will have effected both spirit and attendance. Every church should have a supply of substitute Sunday school teachers; cars and buses will be needed to transport children and old people to the Sunday school picnics and autumn festivals; trucks will have the pleasant task of gathering up Christmas supplies for Homes and Orphanages and donated labor may be necessary for some church repairs or enlargements. As sometimes is the case, a neighbor may meet with misfortune, thus giving the church a splendid opportunity to help harvest his crops and thrash his

grain. A lot of emergency work can be done by telephone, but responsibility must be placed for any task.

Adequate financial resources. There are financial resources enough in the average rural community to challenge a full-time pastor. Many churches tie the hands of the pastor and their own by limiting the financial resources for the biggest business in the world. Some churches and contributors pay the same amount as last year, regardless of needs and changing conditions. Pastors need adequate salaries to keep them free from financial worries and that they may release the best talent and energy they have for the church. No one can do good, constructive work who must burn his energies in trying to make ends meet and worry about the future. Many wars have been lost for want of funds, and many churches have dropped behind because of local financial conditions. Ministers fail because of inadequate tools, equipment, books, auto and convention expense. To be fully effective, the church needs to provide funds for needed equipment and to pay workers.

Wealth has marvelously increased in this age.

God is giving the Christian world vastly increased financial resources, because He needs vastly increased funds for His business, and feels that He can trust Christians to be honest and give Him, his due share, instead of spending it all on themselves. His work is ever growing, He expects and needs a large proportion of our income to do His work.¹

Modern Methods. It is quite evident that any rural church is efficient or inefficient by its attitude toward modern methods in evangelism, Christian education, finances, organization and administration, growing of spiritual life, or building up attendance. Methods are not to be discarded just because they are old, but because there is something better to take their place. Objectors to modern methods speak in familiar language everywhere in our churches. They say, "We never did it that way," "We have tried it, but it would not work," "We voted it down once," "We can't afford it," "We are doing as much as other churches." Church diplomacy and tact will be necessary to secure new methods in many churches, but it can be done. Many objected to Jesus' new methods, for he did things in startling new ways when these

would better advance His plan and mission. The church should follow His example, instead of pleasing itself by adhering to methods now wholly inadequate.

A Spirit of Cooperation. The old slogan, "Competition is the life of trade" has long since been seriously questioned. Cooperation is the life of the church. Team work will win where everyone plays the game. Church leaders are earnestly desirous of cooperation, in fact it is necessary for success and it is possible. Every rural church should cooperate with the churches of its denomination and with all denominations of the community in a unified program of advance. Churches that are selfishly busy in denominational rivalry and jealousy will not receive the blessings of God or the confidence of the community. Too much time, energy, money and planning are spent in competition between churches, rather than in cooperation in building the Kingdom. Churches must also cooperate with institutions doing good work in the community, which they do not do, but which is supported by church people. Organizations such as the Salvation Army, Christian Associations, Temperance Unions, Anti-saloon League, all look to the cooperation and support of the churches. "We are workers together with God."¹

A Schedule. Dr. Fred Fisher says, "To run a church without a schedule is like trying to run a train service without a time table."² When one item of the church program is undertaken the whole church should unite in the task. Events should occur in season as may seem best or as has been planned by the denomination in its quadrennial program. Dr. D. T. Gregory³ keeps all the pastors and leaders supplied with a program of activities for each annual conference year and the Conference Superintendents add the events to take place within their respective annual conferences of a local nature. At the beginning of the annual conference year the pastor and Official Board should start with a well-planned program for the parish. This program should be accepted by the church and set into operation at once.

September and October are rally months. There are but few churches that have not been effected by vacations, summer slumps and a general spirit of lethargy this time of the

¹I Cor. 3:9.

²Fisher—Ways to win, p. 192.

³Gregory—Executive Secretary of Board of Administration, U. B. in Christ.

¹McGarrah—Modern Church Management, p. 65.

year. Goals should be set—attendance, financial, social and spiritual, and adopted in every organization and department. Definite responsibilities must be assigned to leaders. To have the new year start in a promising way—a good visitation campaign should be put over. Constructive and far-reaching publicity should be used at this time.

Thanksgiving Day comes in November. This month is designated by our church as Home Missions month. This is the time for the church to broaden out into wider relations through Home Missions education. Mission study classes will be numerous and throbbing with interest as they accept the challenge of our home fields. This is a good time for the pastor to present the facts, victories and needs of the fields of his people. A missionary spirit can be created that will continue throughout the year. The last Sunday of the month is designated by the Home Missions and Church Election Board for receiving an offering to help carry on the work of this department of which Drs. U. P. Hovermale and Stanley B. Williams are our efficient and faithful secretaries.

In December we commemorate God's gift to the world. It is the proper time to emphasize the stewardship of possessions in relation to the Kingdom. Since the financial year of the denomination begins in June, one-half of the year will end with this month. If the local church treasurer's books so indicate, it will be well to make an effort to reach payment of one-half of the church's budget for local and benevolent causes. The Homes and Orphanages receive the annual Christmas offering from the churches of the denomination. Advance planning always aids in the securing of funds for this most worthy institution.

It is appropriate to start the New Year with a week of prayer. From this time until Easter the church will be intensely active in the work of evangelism. There are two patriotic days in February, which should have worthy recognition—the birthdays of two great Americans, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. One special day in the whole calendar of the year is given to Foreign Missions and that is the first Sunday in March. This day is always preceded by a period of education and celebrated with special programs and a generous offering. Although every season of the year ought to find the church open for decisions for Christ and uniting with the church, these months seem to be the most in order for soul-

winning. Palm Sunday is always a red letter day for decisions in the Sunday school. Easter is ingathering day, when baptismal services are held for all ages and applicants received into church membership. Because of the special significance of Easter, many churches are observing Holy Week and holding pre-Easter evangelistic services with very gratifying results. The seven weeks following Easter to Pentecost is a period for profitable study and observance. Ascension Day should be duly observed and Pentecost victoriously celebrated.

The month of May opens with the observance of Mothers' Day and Christian Endeavor Anniversary. Much should be made out of these two events. The month will profitably be spent in gathering up loose ends in order to close the financial year in a businesslike way by June first. Materials will be gotten from the Board of Administration and distributed preparatory to the Every Member Enlistment Campaign. Special preparation of the church and canvassers, a good start, generally results in a victorious canvass. Memorial Day comes at the close of May and will be religiously observed.

Along with Children's Day and Independence Day, June and July are the months of commencements, daily vacation Bible Schools, conventions, leadership training camps, reunions, vacations, and recreations. All these activities should be harnessed for the Kingdom.

August is the month spent in preparation for the Annual Conference. All budgets are to be brought up in full, reports made to the Conference Superintendent, Group Leaders and Statistical Secretary and Conference Treasurer. These reports always indicate a trend and are generally the source of inspiration at the Annual Conference. They should be accurate and sent in on time.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS OF RURAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Twelve major problems of the rural church have been selected for development, with helpful solutions suggested. These, in a general way, will cover the field of the rural church. Detail work is left largely to the pastor and his faithful helpers. The sources of suggestions have grown out of wide reading on the subject at hand, personal experience and observation. A few illustrations of rural churches in St. Joseph Conference which were gradually dying, but are now functioning in perfect harmony with their mission and meeting the various needs of their respective communities in a larger way, will be given.

Rural Mindedness

The Need. One of the greatest problems facing the rural church today is the developing of a deep and genuine rural mindedness. This is not a new problem, but one that has characterized that particular church and communities for years. Rural people should take just pride in who they are, where they are and what they are doing. That is rural mindedness. Such an attitude is necessary to success anywhere in anything. The spirit of a community must constantly be uplifting and progressive. There should be enough warm interest in rural life to challenge one to give himself wholeheartedly to its best welfare. If more farmers had the same intense interest in the welfare of their communities as they have in accumulating money and buying more farms, marvelous changes would take place in our rural life. And if rural people showed the same concern for improving their surroundings as city people do, the rural districts would soon surpass the city in beauty and joys of real living. Many rainy days and spare time, otherwise unemployed, could be utilized in developing rural mindedness, if the desire were strong enough to do so.

Heretofore there has been little or no program for community betterment in our churches and community for the developing of rural mindedness. Individual families have taken interest in improving their lands, buildings and premises. It is always a source of satisfaction to travel through such communities rather than through those where fences are down, weeds are taking the crops, buildings are dilapidated and premises are uninviting. Peoples and communities are judged by outward appearances and it is naturally concluded that ideals and life are on the same low levels as are their surroundings. In most instances this is sadly true.

Rural Culture. Individual evidences of material prosperity and a desire to appear well are good in themselves, but not enough in any community. There must be a consuming interest in the material and spiritual welfare of one's neighbors, a sense of honor and religion in leaving for those who follow a more goodly heritage. Farmers must reach out beyond their own homes and farms and help to cultivate a rural culture. The countryside preacher of Galilee said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."¹ Man needs the necessities of life and should have them in abundance, but his deepest need is aspiration, inspiration and God. Material abundance is not enough. The soul is unhappy without proper relationship with its God and neighbor. There should be a deeper appreciation of nature, art, music, and literature by rural people. These make a deeper and richer living for both the individual and the community. The farmer, along with all other men, should have life at its fullest and best. The soul cannot live on corn and hay. The religion of Jesus Christ is an absolute necessity. What Jesus came to give, all men need, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."²

Employing Organizations. Along with our churches, their classes and organizations, there are a number of existing organizations in the community that are the by-products or allies, not enemies of the church. These should be encouraged and used in the further developing of rural mindedness. The 4-H Clubs and their leaders are doing a splendid work in bringing boys and girls into wholesome activities and rural mindedness. The F. F. A. and the F. H. A. are doing the same

¹Matthew 4:4.

²John 10:10.

effective work with high school groups. The Grange, Farm Bureaus, Farmers' Institutes, Short Course Classes, Extension Service of State Universities and the Federal Government are all making a great contribution to rural life, with their meetings, schools and camps for rural people. The Hi-Y and Girl Reserves, Boy and Girl Scouts are reaching many communities in the country in a very effective way. Processes may seem to work slowly, but communities do respond and do change for the good.

Surveys. What is the task of the church in developing rural mindedness? The needs of the individual community must first be ascertained. This can best be done by making a thorough community survey every two or three years to determine some facts on which to base a program of activities. Such a survey will put every home on record concerning its Christian attitudes and service. While most pastors call regularly on all the members of their communities, a survey will present a new approach to every home where people are not connected with some church. The church will also discover its field for evangelism and other needy service. The survey will keep the community interested and enlisted in some activity through the church. Those making the survey will be helped as well as those responding to it. It is a mutual ministry. Follow-ups should be made inviting people to the church services, distributing literature, and doing personal work. To a certain extent, the surveyors are responsible throughout the year for those whom they have contacted. They should check on their response, repeat calls even after information has been secured, get them on the mailing list, supply them with special programs and invite them to social functions of the church as well as to its special services. Keep working on the prospects until they are regular in the work of the church, and even then do not stop fellowship and visiting. The survey cards need but few simple questions on them pertaining to the names and ages of the members of the family, church preferences, social life, etc. There are some questions every surveyor should know enough not to ask.

The pastor and a few carefully selected people from the church can best make a community survey. They will have done some calling, are interested in a very definite way and understand the needs of each home. However, the pastor should give a few definite instructions to his helpers, give them

opportunity to ask questions and have prayer together, before going to the field. The community is generally divided into four sections and the surveyors into four groups. This will prevent duplication and economize time and energy. In small towns, where there are several churches, all pastors and leaders should join in the survey. Prayer and tact are two essentials in fact gathering. These facts should be carefully tabulated for future use.

Vital Religion. Vital religion will play no small part in developing rural mindedness. A dying church cannot develop anything that is constructive. A survey can profitably be followed up with a revival meeting. It is then that religious fervor can be put into larger church activities. The pastor and church people, or pastors and church peoples, as the case may be, should undertake a project at a time for community uplift and betterment. It is through doing things that a community spirit is born. Do something as a community. Some worthwhile projects that will be a distinct aid in developing rural mindedness are: A community Christmas tree and a treat for all the children; a clean-up and paint-up campaign, with special recognition for the homes showing the best improvements; organize a community chorus that will present some programs each year at Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving Day; organize and conduct a community adult school; develop a community park; have a community celebration of some historical significance; remove shacks and "sore eyes" from the neighborhood; have a supervised playground; sponsor a community father and son banquet; conduct union revival meetings; have a garden club; softball league; etc. Find something that needs to be done in the community and do it as a community. Where the resources and leadership of a community have been thus united and functioned, the results have been gratifying indeed.

Examples of Projects. The pastor of the Brook United Brethren Church of St. Joseph Conference, an educator and spiritual engineer, has led the churches of the community in a number of splendid projects, which have certainly deepened the community spirit and created rural mindedness. Three of his projects are given:

(1) *Church Billboards.* In the spring of 1938, the pastors of the churches of Brook, Indiana, planned and erected billboards along the highway at the edge of the town. These billboards

were made of lumber of substantial weight and were about 48"x30" in size. They were painted white and the lettering was in black. They bore the following message:

THE CHURCHES OF BROOK
INVITE YOU
METHODIST CHRISTIAN
UNITED BRETHREN

One board was erected at the intersection of Routes No. 16 and No. 41, which is four miles west of Brook, with the same message, but with direction to the town.

The project inspired many favorable comments from local and traveling people. Strangers say that they create a favorable impression of the community before any other contact is made.

On one of the Chicago Radio stations a few months ago, the speaker was giving directions on "Trips to Take." He included the home of George Ade in Hazelden, (2 miles east of Brook) and mentioned our sign in his direction.

(2) *Community Church Night.* On the evening of September 30, 1938, a community church night program was held in the Community Gymnasium at Brook, Indiana. The program was sponsored by the three churches of Brook: Christian, Methodist and United Brethren.

The program consisted of an address by the Hon. Howard E. Wischaupt, an economist of National fame, on the subject: "The Bible and Business."

A union church choir furnished special music and the congregation sang church hymns, that were printed on the program. The three pastors had minor parts on the program. Light refreshments of coffee and sandwiches were served. The congregational offering bore the expense of the program.

An intensive publicity campaign was carried out. The local weekly newspaper carried announcements for two or three weeks in advance. "Convention tags" were placed on all grade and high school pupils. Three days before the program, a group of about twenty young people from all three churches met at one of the churches after school. They were grouped into two groups and each group was assigned to a certain district to distribute handbills to each home. Cars were furnished with adult drivers for the country districts and in less than two hours, every home in the town of eight hundred

population and in the country for a radius of from three to four miles had been contacted for the meeting.

The meeting was attended by an audience of between four hundred and five hundred people. A spirit of Christian unity prevailed. The message of the speaker was a great challenge for Christian loyalty. This meeting was held on Friday evening before Rally Day and its effects were observed in increased interest and attendance.

(3) *C. E. Holds Dinner Meetings.* Many of our young people live in the country, but come to school in town. We ordinarily hold our Christian Endeavor Society on Thursday evening. During our revival in January, we invited our young people to come to the church at the dismissal of school at noon on Thursday, and warm sandwiches and chili soup was prepared by the pastor's wife and adult helpers. The young people brought a dime to pay expenses.

All ate together at one large table in the church dining room and following the meal, the music director of the church led in a song-fest of revival music until the pupils had to return to school at 1:00 o'clock. This meeting was highly appreciated and has been kept up each Thursday during the bad weather months from January to the middle of March. Sometimes the Christian Endeavor topic was briefly presented and sometimes the period was given entirely to the song-fest. The attendance has been good and the young people's response to the Sunday evening Church choir has been increased. The church is about five blocks from the school.

Church Extension

Extending the Kingdom of God in the earth is ever the vocation of the Christian Church. All men, women, boys and girls need Jesus Christ and his pardoning grace. Provision has been made for all by means of the Cross of Christ. The method by which salvation is attained is by faith in the substitutionary Atonement of Christ. These are eternal facts. It is the plan of God, that his children unite with the Christian Church and through it help propagate the Gospel. Every Christian needs the church—its worship, fellowship, instruction and service. The church, likewise, needs all its members to faithfully and heroically carry on its work. All church people should be diligent students of the ideals, principles and practices of the Christian religion. The gospel is not only for all peoples, but

also for all phases of life. Church buildings, programs, plans and leaders must be ever improving to meet the needs of changing ages and needs. The task is never finished, as long as children continue to be born into the world and time rushes on. The rural areas have their vast numbers of unreached folks who need to be won to Christ and enlisted in the Master's service.

Origin of Rural Life Commission. During the years of 1920-30, known as peak years in material production and prosperity, the St. Joseph Annual Conference, for one reason or another, witnessed the closing of twenty rural churches, an average of two churches each year. This alarming situation compelled thorough study and the finding of a way to change it. To it, the leaders of the conference and a few earnest pastors gave themselves vigorously. The unfavorable trend must be stopped and the rural churches rebuilt, lest they follow in the same train. The result was, that the Rural Life Commission came into being and started its work of rural redemption on as large a scale as funds and time would permit. The last ten years have witnessed the closing of no rural churches, but to the contrary, the opening of a few that were closed during the former decade. The tide has turned and the dread of pastors going to rural churches, many of them which seemed to be failing institutions, has been greatly lessened. A number of new rural parsonages have been built and dedicated over this period, souls won and church membership increased. The last four-point circuit of the conference passed last year, a number of rural stations have been established, rural churches have become Religious Telescope quota winners, salaries have been increased, benevolent receipts have been much larger, denominational loyalty to the church and its program greatly deepened and there is a new spirit of optimism possessing the people of the land. The Rural Life Commission is now in its fifth year of employing a full time rural evangelist, who is also doing constructive work in Christian education. The organization now has the full support and backing of the conference and has now become its most dynamic force in Kingdom building. Many other conferences are doing likewise.

Rural Revivals Held. Believing that a "Holy Spirit revival" is the true basis of getting the backward and poorly functioning rural church back on its feet, its confidence and power

restored in the community, and doing its part in the program of human redemption, the Rural Life Commission ventured upon employing a full time rural evangelist five years ago. This noble man and veteran of many evangelistic efforts, labored in the weakest churches of the conference with discouraged pastors and people. After three years of strenuous work which were very fruitful, he returned to the rural pastorate. During these three history making years, he conducted sixty-six revival meetings, an average of twenty-two each year; total attendance at the meetings was 58,870; he made 2219 calls; preached 691 sermons; rendered 721 special musical selections; conversions (not reconsecrations) numbered 562; accessions during the meetings were 336, with scores uniting with the churches later. It would be difficult to estimate the influence of these meetings in terms of abiding values and loyalty; eternity will reveal those.

The second evangelist who took up the torch, had labored independently in our rural fields for several years, thus increasing the impact of rural evangelism in our churches. He has been a farmer for some years and is, by nature and training, a rural evangelist; his noble and capable wife accompanies him to all his meetings. After one year in the field, as Conference Rural Evangelist, his work has been so successful, that he cannot meet the demands made upon him. A second man could profitably be employed in the same work of the conference. He reports the following results of his first years labors: eight meetings held over a period of twenty-two weeks, 202 sermons and addresses given, 240 calls on delinquents and prospects, 151 definite decisions for Christ, forty-three additions to churches during the meetings, forty-four new family altars, thirty-nine new tithers, total attendance at meetings held, 12,049. The Evangelist's second year will surpass the first one in numbers and influence by far.

Rural Surveys. Whether it be for the rural evangelist or a pastor who is about to held his revival, upon invitation, the Rural Life Commission hastens to lead in making the survey. Neighboring pastors are always glad to help in this ministry of love and service. Details of conducting a survey are described in Chapter III. A fellowship dinner will be served at some accessible place and a "pot luck" supper for the entire community in the evening. At supper, the results of the survey will be made known and the community challenged by the

awaiting task. An inspiring evening evangelistic service will be held, with one of the visiting pastors preaching. Where surveys have thus preceded meetings, they have all been a decided success. Three survey results will give us a cross section of rural needs and opportunities.

The Seven Mile survey was made December 29, 1938, by three rural pastors and the Conference Superintendent, with the following results:

Number of families contacted.....	56
Number of people represented by families.....	178
Number of adults.....	103
Number under eighteen years of age.....	75
Number not church members.....	91
United Brethren belonging at Seven Mile.....	39
Methodists belonging at Anoka.....	21
Pike Creek Christian Church.....	9
Members of church as in Logansport or Walton.....	18
Those attending Sunday schools.....	60
Not attending any church.....	118

Union Chapel survey was made March 31, 1939, by five pastors and the Conference Superintendent, with the following results:

Number of families contacted.....	74
Number of people represented by families.....	243
Number of adults.....	135
Number under eighteen.....	108
Not members of any church.....	140
Lutherans.....	13
Methodist Protestants.....	14
Wesley Methodists.....	1
Church of God.....	3
Christian Church.....	11
Catholic.....	9
Mission church.....	1
Nazarenes.....	7
Church of the Brethren.....	2
United Brethren.....	18
Number attending some Sunday school.....	90
Number not attending any church.....	153

Wadena survey was made in August, 1939, by six pastors, with the following results:

Number of families.....	112
Number of people represented by families.....	390
Number of adults.....	223
Number under eighteen years old.....	167
Methodists.....	56
Presbyterian.....	39
Baptists.....	22

Catholics.....	84
Christians.....	30
Christian Science.....	7
Lutherans.....	2
Mennonites.....	9
Wesley Methodists.....	7
Jehovah's Witness.....	6
United Brethren.....	56
Members of no church.....	52
Protestants attending church somewhere.....	91
Protestants, mostly members not attending.....	215

The last field is proving the most difficult to win, because of the many denominations represented. Unless Protestant Churches can unite in a comprehensive community program, this will be an open field for radical movements. The situation is quite hopeful.

Other Rural Evangelism. With one hundred of the churches of the Annual Conference in small towns or open country, the work of the rural evangelist can be confined only to the most needy fields. Other methods of extending the Kingdom in our rural fields must be employed. To deepen and intensify the evangelistic spirit in the conference, the evening services of the annual conference of one week are given to evangelistic services, with an evangelist of outstanding ability employed. The Annual Rural Church Banquet for pastors and laymen is held the second night of the conference session and has been a decided and growing success. Soon after the Annual Conference session the two-day Evangelistic Retreat is held, which has proved to be a great blessing to pastors and churches. Nine rural church group conferences, with a challenging program and evening evangelistic services, are held each year in March. These meetings have become a part of the conference program and build up powerful anticipation for pre-Easter services. The summer camp at Lake Wawasee brings together over 700 young people in fellowship, study, play and evangelism. During this testing week, every young person attending has the claims of Jesus Christ presented to him. It is here that many are converted each year and not a few decide to make some form of Christian service their life work. Some of our rural pastors contract with their congregations with the understanding they can hold at least two rural meetings for another pastor. Many pastors exchange meetings, some hold their own meetings; and a few employ men, who are engaged in evangelism as a vocation. It is thus, that practically every rural

church has at least one revival meeting each year. This work is supplemented by the pastor's personal evangelism.

The City Church Helps. The city churches are constantly reaping, where the rural churches have sown and cultivated. It is important, therefore, that the city church should be greatly interested in rural evangelism. A large number of the city pastors and church officials were country born and reared. The nation and city church should be deeply concerned about the welfare of rural churches. Four times each year, the city churches join in a conference wide extension offering to help carry on rural evangelism and education. This keeps the city church's eye on the country and its heart open to rural needs. Response to these offerings has been very gratifying.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND RURAL LEADERSHIP

According to Mark A. Dawber, there are 1204 children under fifteen to every 1000 adults over twenty, and an average of $3\frac{3}{4}$ children to each rural home; in the city there are an average of $1\frac{2}{3}$ children to each home in America. The average population of the rural sections is more than twice that of the cities. This makes the task of providing Christian nurture in the country a large and challenging one.¹ The future of the nation rests with her youth and should be of primary concern to the church. Great areas of rural sections have not been reached by the ministry of the church, have no programs of leadership and Christian education. What will happen to our rural youth? This should greatly concern, both the city and rural churches and the nation. The city church has reaped and will continue to do so, where the rural church has sown.

Agencies of Christian Education

The Rural Home. The home precedes the church in time and importance in the plan of God. It is the cornerstone of our civilization, and must be preserved for a Kingdom building program. The rural home offers larger possibilities for the preservation of the social, physical, mental and spiritual values and fine arts, than the city; it is more self-sustaining. Religious and spiritual growth is centered in the various interests for the farm. It may be a worship, playground, school and church all in one. Proper attitudes toward life are taught in the home—on the farm in particular. Cooperation is developed as each member has definite tasks to do as a part of the daily chores and work. Service is rendered without thought of rewards.

The farm home is an institution of character building. Parents must accept their God-given responsibilities of bringing

¹Mark Dawber—Rebuilding Rural America, (see Bibliography), p. 96.

their children to Christ early in life and providing nurture in the home. This can be done through family worship, a consistent example on the part of parents of what is taught, instruction, pictures, conversation and play. The rural pastor can aid greatly and constructively in helping his people to build and follow programs of family worship. In a recent address, Bishop H. H. Fout stated that fifty years ago 70% of the homes of his denomination observed family worship; to-day only 20% do so. That sturdy and aggressive denomination has grown in numbers and efficiency in many other things, but neglect of home life is most tragic. Rural homes find it much easier for a program of worship than those in complex city life. Dean C. E. Ashcraft of Bonebrake Seminary says, "The family is the educator of Divine things. To fail to maintain the family means we are bound for the rocks. The spirit of prayer which Jesus taught will sweeten family relations. The family altar is God's institution of forgiveness and worship in the home." A return to the family altar, the setting up of new altars, would make the home safe, the church alive, insure a community with high ideals and lead to a national revival of religion in America.

The Sunday School. The Sunday school comes first in meeting the spiritual needs of rural people. It has done much, through conventions and associations, to bring communities together, thus eliminating a lot of sectarianism and bigotry through organized Sunday school work. It has also been a powerful democratic social factor in the religious life of rural areas. The Sunday school is still the most important institution for religious nurture and character building in rural communities. It gives religious instruction, and there can be no ideals without instruction. The rural people will look to the Sunday school for Christian education for time to come. While the rural Sunday school has its limitations and weaknesses, there are still vast areas of our country without its stimulating force and light. It is estimated, that there are ten thousand rural communities in our country without a Sunday school, thirty thousand rural hamlets without spiritual guidance from trained teachers, and thirteen million children and young people without any religious instruction. This opportunity should stir the concern of the nation and its churches, to organized action.

The equipment of many rural Sunday schools is meager and of poor quality and the supply of trained teachers is inadequate for the task of Christian education. Equipment and organization are two essentials for a successful rural Sunday school. We must make the best out of our present buildings and equipment and create a demand for what is sorely needed. The Sunday school should be departmentalized, graded; lesson materials and pupils classified. Classes must not be too large. Promotion Day should be observed annually. Make much of the day, by way of programs, drills, dramatics and a special sermon. With their promotions, the Sunday school can profitably present to the children, Bibles, seals, certificates, buttons or diplomas.

Upon the Superintendent of the rural Sunday school, rests a heavy, but pleasant responsibility. He is the executive head of the Sunday school to carry out the will of the Council. He represents the whole school. He is responsible for teachers and the proper spirit of worship. He should visit all the departments of the school regularly and have a close knowledge of the teachers and their work. Hearty cooperation of all the officers, teachers, parents and pupils is not only desired by the Sunday-school Superintendent, but it is necessary if the school is to function properly in the largest way. Groups in the school will do better work, create loyalty and make a much larger contribution to the church if organized—particularly is this true of senior and adults classes. Monthly class socials will attract and add new members to classes. Friendly competition between classes will stimulate interest and attendance. It is well to keep in mind the agricultural background in all phases of Christian education in the rural church.

Christian Endeavor. The Christian Endeavor Society has been an effective agency for both education and expression in the churches of the land for nearly sixty years. Live and growing societies augur a promising future for any church. Every rural pastor will act wisely in taking special interest in the work of the Christian Endeavor Society among his young people. If he believes in them as he should, they will respond to any reasonable challenge he may make of them. Rural youth is not attracted to easy things. Adult Christian Endeavor Societies are making a place for themselves today. In some local churches it has become the most dynamic organization in existence. It stands for all that the church stands

for; it is the church in action. Christian Endeavorers of all ages aid in enlisting their members in active service in building up evening attendance, and are in training for leadership in the local church and conference. Many societies die or function merely as a social group because of lack of program, definite goals, local leaders that care, and older people to pray for and encourage them. Goals having to do with membership, missions, social life, publicity, finances and spiritual life and an effort to realize them, will be a help to all groups of Christian Endeavor. The vision of every society must be kept large.

Church Night. In many rural churches the old time prayer and testimony meeting has been abandoned entirely; monotony and lack of program were largely responsible for their passing. In some places it has been resurrected, and with some changes and enlargement this much-needed service is working wonders. What is known as Church Night, is being observed by many rural churches weekly, bi-monthly or monthly, with marked success. The program for this service is varied and must be adapted to the community. This type of service will require as much time and energy in preparation as do regular Sunday services. The program generally starts about 6:30 o'clock with a "pot luck" or "carry in" supper, with someone in the church kitchen providing hot coffee and other minor necessities. This affords a social contact possible in no other way. There is great value in eating together. It is then that we really get acquainted.

Supper is generally followed by a half-hour musical program. After thirty minutes of devotions, which generally includes prayer and a message from the Bible, class discussion groups can be wisely engaged in. These studies may include the Sunday-school lesson for the coming Sunday, leadership training, missions, Bible characters and the life of Christ. One is free to elect his group. The remainder of the evening, if there be any, may be spent in choir rehearsal or board meetings. This type of service will come nearer meeting the needs of the present day than any other one. It is a mixture of the educational, social, devotional and inspirational. Time will be economized and everyone will have a part in the services.

Missions. Missionary education should be promoted vigorously in the rural church. Missionary programs are available for all its departments. Missionary sermons, stereopticon

slides of mission fields, returned missionaries, missionary reviews and biographies, all help to stimulate missionary activities and programs. The pastor should know every missionary of his church by name and the fields in which they are serving. The Women's Missionary Society and Otterbein Guild enlists the women and girls of the church to help support missionaries in the home and foreign fields. They create and spread the missionary spirit in our local churches. These societies are also among the best friends of the local work. They relate themselves to all other activities of the local church and can always be relied upon for carrying out the entire program of the church. Perhaps the greatest contributions they make to the local church are the spiritual emphasis and the up-to-date methods employed. It is the most efficient organization in the church. Every woman and girl in the church and community should unite with one of these organizations for the promoting of missions in the open country. The annual branch meetings are always a source of inspiration and fellowship.

The Woman's Aid Society. The Woman's Aid Society has been one of the most helpful organizations in the Christian church, financially and socially. Many churches owe their origins and preservation to this society. Members of the Aid often labor hard and sacrificially with only small returns. They are always giving to meet the various needs of the church. In rural districts, practically every woman is an active member of the Aid. During the winter time, this organization furnishes hot lunches at public sales and farm meetings; in the summer it provides meals for the thrasher men, and other community tasks such as silo fillings, clover hullings, wood cuttings, conventions, institutes, rallies and schools. While the organization provides for these various community functions in a physical way, its members should not substitute these activities for stewardship for all of life. There are higher planes of service for the Woman's Aid. It can be a spiritual force praying for all the interests of the church and promoting the work of the congregation. There is not enough of the educational emphasis in the modern Aid society. It could have more to do and that profitably with Bible study, book reviews, mission classes, music, art, temperance work and public school activities. This would aid in providing a

rural culture for its members. The "giving out" spirit should be manifested as much as the constantly "taking in" work.

Rural Leadership Training Schools. These schools are greatly needed in rural communities, but so far have not been organized in great numbers. Some community schools have been organized and served their churches very profitably. A three-point circuit school in the Atwood, Indiana, community conducted a successful Circuit Leadership Training School last March. The pastor is a man with a well-equipped mind, a creative thinker and vigorous worker. The school first began in his mind, who throughout his ministry has given considerable attention to the picking and training of leaders. The direct beginning of the school was at the presentation of the value of a leadership training school at the October meeting of the Board of Christian Education. The Board agreed to back the pastor in the new project. Three courses were taught, "How the Bible Came to Be," "Understanding Ourselves," and "The Vacation Church School." The pastor served as Dean of the School. The teachers were accredited by the Department of Leadership Training.

The County Young People's Superintendent, the Primary Superintendent of the local church and the Pastor did the teaching. The Sunday schools of the circuit did the financing. The School met for two class sessions (7:15-9:15) on Monday and Thursday evenings for three consecutive weeks. The place of school was at the strongest of the three churches. By four types of publicity, the churches were made conscious of the advantages of the school. Statements were made in the public meetings; a mimeographed sheet, concisely stating all needed information was placed in the hands of all; a newspaper write-up helped; the pastor, as he had opportunity, quietly told individuals that he wished them to study in a particular class. There was an average attendance of 48, and 43 leadership training credits were issued. Three churches will not prevent a pastor from holding a Leadership Training School, if there is no other such school functioning in the community.

Rural Daily Vacation Bible School. The Vacation Bible School is making a large contribution to our civilization. The difficulties that have bound us to one hour a week religious instruction are being overcome. This school has a larger curriculum, does better teaching, has longer recitations and

a more varied program than our Sunday schools. The school as such is growing rapidly and should be made a part of the program of the individual church. In a thriving farming community near Bourbon, Indiana, a three-point circuit has conducted a successful vacation school the last three summers. The pastor, an earnest and devout soul, is a firm believer in Christian education. The school was held on afternoons during three weeks in July. Not many Intermediate age children attend Rural Vacation Bible schools. They must help with the work on the farm. The course of study was largely arranged by the pastor. The memorizing of Scripture was given emphasis. The Course of Study consisted of Primers of Faith, A Bible Story period, Bible Geography, The Way of Life and the booklet, "Our Church." Supervised play was conducted during the recess period. The enrollment in the school last summer was 64 children, with an average attendance of 55. Awards were given for conduct and effort, perfect attendance, Sunday church attendance, bringing new pupils, rainy day attendance and for work done in the school. Parents, pastor and children are all gratified with the results of the school. While a large number of our rural churches are conducting individual and community vacation Bible schools, even a three-point circuit may also have its school each summer. Faith will surmount all obstacles to do the work of him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."¹

Rural Free Chautauqua. The first Rural Free Chautauqua of the conference, a community affair, devoted to the social, intellectual, and spiritual uplift of the people, originated in the mind and heart of a farseeing pastor of the Newville community, in 1914; his dream became a reality, the organization was effected and the first session held August 17-28 of the same year. The days of this memorable week were designated as, Musical Day, Education Day, Temperance Day, Rural Church Day, Sunday School Day, and Church Day. Some of the nation's leading speakers including Prof. M. A. Honline and Dr. J. Raymond Schutz, were called in for these special days. All local musical and other talent available was used. The expense of this first chautauqua was over \$400.00 and was met by offerings and program advertisement. The venture was so successful, that the Rural Free Chautauqua of Newville,

¹Luke 18:16.

has been the outstanding attraction of the summer in that part of the state for twenty-six years. The program has varied with the years, expenses have been larger, but the organization has had money in its treasury after each annual session. Pastors have come and gone, officers have changed, but this Rural Free Chautauqua gets better and bigger each year. At present, the pastor who was the instigator of the Chautauqua, is again serving the Newville charge. The testimony of the organization's usefulness is here stated:

The community has been lifted to a higher plane, its vision has been broadened, it now aims higher, the chautauqua brings out the best that is in us by coming in contact with the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the country. It also has taught us hospitality, liberality and sociability.¹

In the Burr Oak community, some sixty miles from Newville, where the instigator of the Newville Chautauqua spent his boyhood days, and incidentally the writer started his Christian life in this community, the Rural Free Chautauqua has been held during the first week in August for the last twelve years with the same marked success. The program is similar to the one of the Newville community organization. Through its publicity program, the church contacts business men of town for ten miles in all directions. The church is well-known and is meeting the needs of the community in a large way. These are the two leading Rural Free Chautauquas of the St. Joseph Conference. They have become a major part of the program of these churches.

Rural Leadership

There is, at present, an over-supply of workers in the production of material things and a strangely contrasting shortage of leaders in the promotion of religious, social and recreational welfare in our rural areas. The religious and social needs in rural America are appalling. The church must discover leaders and find a way for training and placing them in our rural fields. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

Ministerial Leadership. Unfortunately, a false and misleading psychology, regarding the rural pastorate, has gripped the American clergy. Few of them have any desire to spend their lives in rural pastorates. Some maintain that it is a good

¹Watchword of October 29, 1922. Testimony.

place to begin one's ministry, but he should take the first opportunity offered him for promotion to a large city church. Many pastors, having followed this procedure, have learned that their conclusions were illogical and false. They were promoted to more grave problems, higher costs of living, keen competition of city churches, and numerous demands that brought no financial returns. Some pastors feel, that the rural church does not pay salary enough for a decent living. They do not consider the possibility of a fertile and productive garden, much less overhead, fewer demands to give to multiplied individuals, organizations and movements, and higher standards of dress in the city for the entire family. There are resources enough in almost any rural field to challenge a pastor's full time and energy.

Other pastors feel that there is no future for the rural church and they should not spend their time trifling with a losing concern. Many rural churches that have been closed were not lost, but absorbed in a consolidated building and larger program. Some churches have closed for lack of a trained and efficient leadership. Still others maintain, that the rural church is incurably conservative and would not respond to a modern program and methods. The fact of the matter is that rural people have all other modern advantages and are waiting for leaders who understand their needs and will lead them into modern churchwork with all its glowing benefits.

Not a few rural pastors feel, that because their work is in the country, they are never recognized. In conferences, conventions, schools, rallies, community gatherings, etc., the city pastor is called to address them and their people and tell them of their latest needs and how to meet them. While there are elements of truth in these existing circumstances, they do not prove the superiority of the city pastor over the one serving in the open country. The fault is more of a lack of foresight and of appreciation on the part of those who plan these functions and gatherings.

The rural pastorate provides all that the city pastorate does by way of opportunities, service, rewards of comfort, and more. This whole thing needs to be made clear to those contemplating entering the Christian ministry. Our colleges and seminaries draw their students from the rural areas and should assume the major responsibility of training and re-

turning them to the tasks rural life of today demands. Agricultural colleges have made a distinct contribution to rural leadership. Rural extension work has furnished leaders with a technique for rural tasks. Summer schools for rural pastors held by such colleges have been a great help to rural leadership. The obligation for a program of rural education should rest more heavily upon our denominational colleges and seminaries. They should provide a religious extension service, that will touch all rural life.

Rural people know their needs and are demanding a pastoral leadership adapted to the open country. They do not want pastors who do not want them. Pastors must believe in rural life, love the people and have a fervent desire to meet their every need. Our seminaries, with few exceptions, are not prepared to thoroughly train their theological students for the rural fields. A few of them have Chairs of Rural Life and extension training. Training in Bible, church history, and sermon preparation are absolutely necessary, but there should be more training in pastoral work in our schools. Ministers must know something about economics, recreation, social life and other problems with which the rural people are confronted. Seminaries would do well to begin with the study of the small country church, rural economy and life of the Bible, stories and Sunday school materials. It would be a decided advantage to a rural pastor to acquaint himself with Farm Bureaus and kindred organizations that help to mould rural life.

Country people care little for doctrinal or topical preaching, church history or even theology. Preaching to them must be simple, direct and understood in terms of rural experience and life. They want satisfaction concerning the problems uppermost in the rural thinking of the day. Because of modern convenience, the old pastoral call has passed, and the service of the pastor is largely confined to case work in the rural fields. The work of pastoral psychiatry is not confined to the great cities. Trained in Christian nurture, the pastor's major task is that of tending individuals—especially is that true of children and young people. The rural home should be made a school for Christian nurture. Rural life needs a creative ministry, less theory and more of growth of the inner life.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."¹

Dr. A. J. W. Meyers lists the characteristics of successful rural leadership to be as follows:

1. The ability to see opportunities.
2. A real leader leads.
3. The power to overcome difficulties.
4. Love of people.
5. The "Second Mile" spirit.
6. Humility.
7. Cooperativeness.
8. A growing mind.
9. Cleanliness and common honesty.
10. Religious enthusiasm.
11. Adequate educational background.
12. The practice of Christlikeness.²

Lay Leadership. The rural pastor must not undertake his task alone. There is work for all and all can work. J. Wilbur Chapman is credited with the statement, "It is better to put ten men to work, than to do ten men's work." The directing head of the church needs helpers. While most rural churches have not yet awakened to the fact that they need trained expert helpers in teachers of religion, home visitors among women, and recreational leaders; nevertheless, there are great opportunities for such leaders. Volunteer leadership will claim our attention. The lament of many rural pastors is, "We have no leaders in our churches." There are within every church, people with leadership potentialities which need to be developed. We are not using the rural laymen as we should. The pastors and evangelists cannot bring the rural communities to Christ alone, laymen must help in the work of evangelism, social service and education.

In order to be in intelligent sympathy with the church, all its leaders must know the fundamentals of Christian education. It is essential that the rural church constantly improve its local leadership. Some are satisfied with the present program of the church, others oppose any changes of methods and leaders and a few think we are so modern in our work that we are perfect. The church must assume the responsibility of training its own local leaders. Leadership training must be continuous. Growing leaders need a growing program. The search for truth never ends. Our program of leadership

¹John 10:10.

²A. J. W. Meyers and Edwin E. Sundt, pp. 158-182.

training is quite adequate now. We have a Standard Leadership Training curriculum prepared by more than forty denominations for various departments of the church. Any community can carry on a Community Leadership Training School under the County Board of Christian Education, or have a Circuit Leadership Training School, and if that is not possible, the local church can conduct its own school for leaders under its denominational Board of Christian Education. Churches make good investments when they send their leaders to conference summer camps and college training schools each year. This work will be left largely in the hands of the rural pastor. He must ever be looking at the needs of his church, its entire program, and constantly be engaged in an improvement program.

Occasionally one finds a rural community with an abundance of formally well-trained leadership. Many of them are high school graduates, not a few have finished a College course, and some have even taken University work; among these will be school teachers, ex-school teachers and capable leaders in other fields. The church house is a modern plant and the minister is a man of college training and vision. Such an unusual supply of leadership must be challenged and harnessed up to a Kingdom building program right in its own community. It needs to acquire a sympathetic understanding of rural life and its baffling problems, and then with unreversed consecration build a Christian community.

CHAPTER V

RURAL WORSHIP

Elements

A number of beautiful and meaningful definitions to worship may be given. Dr. DeBlois defines worship thus, "Worship is the outreach of the soul towards God."¹ Another one has said, that worship is conscious contact with God through praise, prayer and surrender of one's self. An appreciation of spiritual things, the fine arts, and a reverence for personality, aids greatly in true worship. We must approach the throne of Grace with a deep reverence and respect for a holy God in our adoration of Him. An attitude of this kind led the ancient prophet Isaiah into a marvelously transforming experience in the temple.² The element of confession is helpful to all worshippers. "An honest confession is good for the soul." Confession is the path to a higher and more useful life. It should never be repressed. Worshippers must "carry everything to God in prayer" and seek His forgiveness, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us." Petition occupies the largest place in our worship and prayers. It must always be according to God's will and the method used to answer according to his selection and direction. "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it,"³ is the promise for all who would pray.

True worship is praise, as well as, prayer. Our worship should abound with gratitude, praise and joy. The lame man healed at the beautiful gate of the temple "entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God."⁴ Jesus dedicated all to the Father's will in his prayers. In dedication we yield our souls to God and give him our whole lives. There is personal fellowship with the Divine in private prayer, in public worship we join our brethren in the same communion; both are worship. Herein lies the distinct benefit

¹PP 32—DeBlois—Christian Religious Education, p. 157.

²Isaiah 6:1-8.

³John 14:14.

⁴Acts 3:9.

of regular public worship. "We have fellowship with him and with one another."

Rural Worship Today

The average rural church of other years has not given much attention to carefully planned worship services or the securing of equipment that would be a definite help in the conducting of a worshipful atmosphere. Today the rural church is giving a more important place to worship in its plans and programs. This new day has not come by accident; both ministerial and lay leaders have helped to bring it about. Institutions which train our leadership could do more to help build dignified and inspiring worship services in the rural churches. It is true, that many rural churches are not so well-equipped for worship as some city churches. However, much equipment is not necessary for worship—proper attitudes are. The people of the rural sections appreciate good music; many rural churches have trained and vested choirs. There is a lot of musical talent available in rural families. It can be harnessed and developed for the Master's use. Worship and communion come quite natural in the open country with all its beauty and freedom for both the daily and special occasions. The rural pastor should spend sufficient time in creating a spirit of worship in the church and building varied and inspiring worship programs.

Helps for Enriching Worship Services

One's personal attitude has a lot to do with his worship. He cannot worship, if any known sin is in his heart—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."¹ Sins must be confessed, judged and forgiven, otherwise we may go through the forms of worship without any vital contacts with the unseen source of power. Such worship is a mockery to God and harmful to the participant. There must be a deep sense of need in the experience of one's soul to prompt us to search for God in humble, but sincere communion with Him. The worshipper's faith must be confident and unwavering: "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek after him."² We must expect something to happen when we worship at our end of the line.

¹P. S. 66:18.

²Heb. 11:6.

Our surroundings have a marked influence upon our worship. A congregation cannot worship acceptably in a dark and dingy room; there must be sufficient mellow light which is helpful and has a quieting influence in worship. Some lights are glaring and blinding to the eyes. The sanctuary of God should be kept well-ventilated and warm. No one can worship God who is suffering from lack of body warmth and stuffy air. Cleanliness must always characterize the rural sanctuary. Dusty benches, floors cluttered with papers, smoked walls and cobwebs on the ceilings of God's house and unswept floors, make it difficult to worship as we should. Such conditions are distasteful and unnecessary in any church. "Cleanliness is godliness." Ushers can make a fine contribution to a worship service. They should never seat people during prayer, the reading of the Bible or the rendering of special musical selections. Ushers will do well not to wear squeaky shoes to church. Music, appropriate for the occasion, should be carefully selected in advance. A natural and dignified poise should always characterize God's minister, the choir director and singers.

The purpose of church going is not merely to hear a sermon, see or be seen; it is primarily to worship God "In the beauty of holiness." Worship, whether in the city or rural church, should always be orderly and unified. The various parts of a worship service must harmonize. One great predominate spiritual truth should permeate the entire worship service. This will mean careful and prayerful preparation on the part of the pastor and choir in advance. More rural laymen should participate in the worship services. Everyone in the congregation should join heartily in singing hymns of praise, in the responsive reading, creed, Lord's prayer, in the offering, and not be a silent listener only. Public worship will edify the participant; it will "build up in the most holy faith." When an audience is being entertained it is not worshipping. The word of God should be so read and heard as to reverence The Book and bring a real message to the hearers. Prayer should abound with thanksgiving, be comforting and uplifting. The content of every worship service should be rich and of such a character as to be acceptable to God and helpful to men.

Graded Worship

Where the entire Sunday school meets for worship in one room, as is the case in many rural churches, even a good worship service means little or nothing to children. "Opening exercises are according to the adult plan of worship. Growth is a law of life." Children and adolescents are constantly developing, physically and mentally. Their spiritual growth will be measured largely by the type and content of Christian education they receive. Both the public schools and Sunday schools pay strict attention to grading pupils according to age, ability and growth. Groups are classified for the purpose of more efficient instruction. There should be the same grading in matters of worship. For the beginners, who cannot sit still any length of time, worship and instruction should be combined. Primary children are interested in Bible stories; juniors are hero worshippers and stories of Old and New Testament characters will interest them greatly and help in life situations. Adolescence is the age of decision and pupils should be given opportunities to decide for Christ. The study of age groups is necessary to determine their worship needs.

Fruits of Sincere Worship

Sincere worship always bears fruit—that is, something really happens when we worship. It happens to the worshipper; God touches his personality, he is blessed and he is consciously aware of it. He has found God through song, prayer, sermon and testimony. New inspiration has come to his soul; God has breathed the breath of life into his being, as he has looked up to Him. The heart has been strangely quieted and given new encouragement to go on, to undertake and to achieve; power has been released from the fountain head of all life. Worship clarifies the vision; many things are made plain to us in worship; problems are solved and ways opened to new sources of power and wisdom. The motives are purified by worship; things thought of and planned that were not in harmony with the will of God, lose their interest and are abandoned as they are brought out into the open light of God's scrutiny. The will is strengthened and undergirded by worship. The consistent church goer is always clear on what is right and what is wrong and has the courage to speak and live his convictions. Some people "are on the fence," so to speak, all the time because of weak wills that need to be touched by power divine. Increased

loyalty is another fruit of sincere worship. We have many loyalties, that rightfully claim our interest—home, school, church, community, state, nation, and with our supreme loyalty ever being to Jesus Christ. Loyalty to Him first will heighten and enrich all other loyalties. Worship also has a great unifying, solidifying and welding together power. We sing the same hymns, hear the same prayers and sermon; we give together and with all our various needs, capacities, likes and dislikes, are brought together as "one body" in Christ. Worship is a definite part of instruction. It is well to teach children early to reverence and worship God. All of us need "wisdom from above."

Conservation of Values

Opinions differ as to how the results of an inspiring worship service may be best conserved. Some worshippers leave the sanctuary quietly without any handshaking or conversation and go to their homes to meditate on what they have felt and heard. For these brethren, one must have the highest respect and appreciation. Not many of this type are to be found in our rural sections—especially among the younger groups. In other churches, business meetings are held after worship services, tickets sold for various functions, organization and class meetings are planned and boards meet. The reasons given are: that the people are together now and better do all these things, avoiding the necessity of another meeting. A third group of church people will visit and fellowship after church for a time equal to some sermons in length, and then one by one leave for their various homes. While business transactions, ticket sale and board meetings can all be cared for on other days and in other places, it is not a bad indication in any church when the brethren remain for renewed fellowship. In fact, it is a healthy indication. If they lose the meaning of the worship service during this period, it must be concluded that they did not get much from the service or have very little capacity for spiritual things.

CHAPTER VI

STEWARDSHIP AND THE RURAL CHURCH

It costs to carry out God's program. Energy, time, talent, thought and money are necessary to do His work. The best, most satisfying, businesslike and simple plan of church finance is God's own plan, as given us in the Scriptures.

The Scriptural Plan

Two texts are sufficient for a basis of God's plan of giving. They are Malachi, 3:10 and I Corinthians 16:2, which read thus, "Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be necessary when I come." Six facts are, herein, set forth concerning our giving to God and His work.

1. Who is to give? Christian giving is not an assessment or a tax, but a voluntary act. It is a universal privilege, "Let everyone of you." Every man, woman, young person and child has the blessed privilege of giving in God's plan.

2. When are we to give? "Upon the first day of the week." Sunday is the best day in the week to make a gift to God. Fifty-two blessings await the giver each year. No Christian life or worship service is complete without an offering to God. It brings giving into the realm of system and regularity. Church expenses are continuous; income should be so, also.

3. What are we to give? "The whole tithe," "As God may prosper." The tithe every Christian owes to God under the law. Under grace, he need not stop at the tithe, he will want to do more.

4. What are we to do with the gift? The storehouse of God is the church. We are to bring our tithes and offerings to the church, God's treasury. The true worshipper will come along

with his gift; will give "not to be seen of men, but unto the Lord."

5. What is the purpose of the tithe? "That there may be food in my house," "no collections necessary." We will have enough for all causes, when our people bring in the whole tithe. There will be no need of worry, deficits, borrowing, unpaid salaries and bills, and the credit of the church jeopardized. Tithing solves our practical problems and gives us great joy.

6. What are the results of using God's plan of church finance? "The windows of heaven opened," that is overflowing spiritual blessings. Whenever Israel restored the tithe, she was blessed and strong. Every church that pays the tithe has a continuous revival. If America would give God the tithe instead of less than 1% of it, a great revival would sweep our country.

Two Farmers Determine Their Tithe

The statement is often made that it is impossible for a farmer to tithe; he cannot determine what his tithe would be. This question was answered satisfactorily by two farmers.

No. 1, a farm owner, said:

I keep a record of my total crop, dairy and live-stock values for the year. From this, I subtract my expenses for hired help, seeds, fertilizer, machinery, etc. We then set aside one-tenth of the remainder of our total income values realized during the year.

No. 2, a renting farmer:

We do not make any great amount, but simply realize a comfortable living on the farm we now occupy. Our plan has been, that I figure myself as having earned a salary in keeping with others who seem to have about the same scale of life that we can enjoy, and then we give to the church one-tenth of that estimated salary.¹

The Rural Church Budget

Since the financial year begins June 1, the Finance Committee of the church should formulate the budget for the coming year one month in advance. This budget is to include two distinct interests—the local current expenses and the benevolent interests. The larger church will include more

¹McGarrah—Modern Church Finance—No 2 Farmers—Churchmen determine the tithe.

items in its budget for local purposes. The average church will include pastor's salary, janitor hire, fuel, light, water, insurance, music, publicity, church debt and incidentals. The benevolences will include the colleges, home missions and church erection, foreign missions, Christian education, Bonebrake Theological Seminary, ministerial pension, administrative work, annual conference needs, interdenominational and undenominational interests recognized by the General Conference. The budget will be adopted by the Official Board of the church and full information, concerning all these interests, must be given to the membership of the local church. Information is always necessary to intelligent and generous giving.

Rural Pastor's Salary

The pastor's salary has a lot to do with the program and progress of the rural church. At present, the rural pastor is poorly paid. Young pastors generally have family obligations and find that from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of their salary goes for car fuel and upkeep, for which the church does not provide. Qualified men must have adequate salaries. One question constantly being asked by men in the ministry is, "Is there a living in the rural pastorate?" The present low salary paid our rural pastors is one of the nation's outstanding social and economic injustices. A recent checkup in our Annual Conference shows 47 pastors, serving from one to three rural churches, receive from \$1200.00 down to \$600.00 yearly salary. The average salary paid these 47 men is but \$945.00 per year.¹ The United Brethren Church is not proud of this situation.

Some solutions to the situation are not in the supplementing of the pastor's salaries by other work, but by the churches making a careful study of the pastor's needs and adjusting their contributions to meet them. Most rural communities have resources enough to challenge a full time pastor and give him adequate support. Various experiments are going forward in the sharing and pooling of salaries of pastors and making assessments to provide funds for a more equitable support of rural pastors. The consolidation of churches is another method being used. This lessens both the number of churches and pastors. In other cases, Home Mission Boards have made a great contribution to the raising of rural pas-

¹D. T. Gregory, Pastors salaries—Conference Minutes 1939.

tors' salaries. A simple plan, that will meet this dire need, will no doubt soon be formulated by the churches of our country. Something must be done. Better try Stewardship first.

Enlisting the Membership

What is known as the Every Member Canvass is no doubt the most Scriptural, wise and satisfying method of raising church funds. When uniting with the church, every applicant covenanted with God "To support the work of the church as God prospers him." Every member for his own good and that the gospel privileges may be taken to all lands, should make some contribution to the yearly budget of the church. Doctor Erdman gives the following reasons for the Every Member Canvass:

1. To express the interest of the church in its members.
2. To enlist the interest of the members in the church.
3. To give information as to the whole work of the church.
4. To secure weekly offerings for the church and its benevolences.¹

The canvassers should be chosen from the "key" members of the church. There should be enough of them, so as to complete the entire canvass in one day. The Board of Administration provides information sheets for the canvassers, so that they go out thoroughly informed and ready to answer any and all excuses offered by stingy church members. Names and territories will be divided, captains selected and the day set for the canvass. The pastor must pray with the groups, consecrate them to their tasks and go with them to the fields. The interests of the church must be presented in a Scriptural, businesslike, courteous way, and without apology for giving. The canvass should not only be an annual visit for funds, but a ministry of love and service also. Some churches provide a supper for the canvassers on their return. It is a good time for fellowship and sharing of victories.

The Follow-Up

Seldom will every member be reached during the day of the big canvass. Some will not be at home; others, for insignificant reasons, will not pledge; grievances will be found—they must always be dealt with kindly and if possible re-

¹Erdman—The work of the Pastor, p. 201.

moved! Grievances generally are small misunderstandings. Again, the goal may not have been reached, thus making it necessary to do some re-canvassing. This must all be done, while the white heat of enthusiasm is still aglow. A thorough and satisfactory Every-Member Enlistment will make it much easier for the one to be made a year hence. The canvassers can profitably call on those whom they have solicited several times during the year for spiritual interests and encouragement. Every thorough canvass will reveal the fact that there is a lot of unused talent in the church and that many leaders are not in leadership positions in the church and community. These should be found a place of larger responsibility. The canvassers should be used for all work of an every-member nature, which the church may need to have done during the year.

Keeping Accounts

Someone may feel now that the canvass has been made and the desired amount of money pledged, the financial problems of the church are all solved for another year. Scarcely a month will have passed until the Financial Secretary and Church Treasurer will have something to say about unpaid salaries and bills due. Church expenses are continuous. There should be sufficient weekly receipts to pay them cheerfully and promptly. Overdue funds call for statements by the Financial Secretary and calls from the Stewards to collect them. Offerings should be brought to the "Storehouse" and thus save the time and gasoline of the Stewards. The church should do all in its power to educate its people to promptness and businesslike methods in giving. The Church Treasurer holds a place of large responsibility. Better have one treasurer for local expenses, and a separate one for benevolences. Treasurers should have a good reputation and know something about bookkeeping. Insist on paying all bills promptly. The books of all church treasurers should be audited as provided for in the Discipline.

Duplex Envelopes

The church has two distinct funds and they should be kept so. Local current expenses are to pay for our church privileges. Benevolent interests include Home Missions, Colleges, Seminary, Board of Administration, Preachers' Pension and the taking of those privileges to those who are in non-Chris-

tian lands. The single envelope system fails in missionary education. When benevolent interests are provided for, all spasmodic efforts and drives that eventually defeat themselves, to raise such funds, are done away with. Some of our churches have adopted the slogan, "As much for others as for ourselves." The duplex envelope answers their purpose admirably. The more tithers a church can enroll the better the duplex envelope works.

Special Funds and Methods for Rural Churches

Special funds, for building or repair purposes, should not be included in the regular church budget, but raised by a special committee which may adopt its own methods. Short time pledges are the most satisfactory. While the tithing way is, "The Way" to raise all church funds and it is not the task of the thesis to suggest a thousand and one ways of raising church funds, four methods, that have been highly successful for rural churches in raising special funds, are mentioned here.

1. God's "Acre" plan. Let each farmer set aside an acre for the Lord's work, cultivate it carefully as he does any other piece of his farm, and turn the proceeds over to special enlargement or building funds. To help complete a much needed basement in the South Whitley United Brethren Church last year, a young married Sunday-school class planted twelve acres with hybrid seed corn, which yielded some seventy-five bushels per acre. The corn was sold and the money used to pay for the much needed basement for Sunday-school room and social affairs. Any and all farmers, who use this method, will be richly repaid in more ways than one.

2. The sale of discarded articles. Such articles as broken jewelry, worn out watches, a host of things kept but never used, trinkets of metal, old furniture, chairs, chests of drawers, tables, bureaus, articles for antique shops in cities, etc. These could all be gathered at some central place, an honest city dealer invited to view them and purchase the lot or an auction sale conducted. Congregations may overhaul, polish and repair these articles and thus realize greater profits.

3. The ladies of the church may use a more effective way than quilting. "From farm to consumer business," through such an agency as the Women's Exchange of the nearest city. As she cans or preserves her tomatoes, cherries, beans, pears,

peaches, beets and all other fruits and vegetables too numerous to mention, let each woman set aside one or more cans of each variety for sale for the benefit of the special fund needed. This method has been found to be quite profitable.

4. One of the best known plans for rural churches is the "Mile of Pennies" plan. This plan is generally carried out by the Sunday school. Use strips of cardboard, each a foot long and containing spaces for sixteen pennies. It is interesting to see which class turns in the greatest number of pennies. The Harrison Printing Company of Union City, Indiana, sells the strips. A mile of pennies will net over \$820.00. "One school of 200 members recently traveled more than 700 feet in the last six months of the year, (\$112.00)."¹ Other schools claim better records; some do not do as well. The method grips young people. The amount is so small, that no one will refuse to help. Building campaigns can be carried to a successful finish.

¹Edmund D. Brunner—The New Country Church Building, p. 130, "One School."

CHAPTER VII

ADEQUATE BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

In Chapter II, the need of an adequate building and equipment was considered as an essential to successful rural church administration. Every other modern convenience is enjoyed by rural people. To minister to their spiritual, educational and social needs, a modern plant and the right kind of equipment are an absolute necessity. This need is considered particularly in the light of the new rural program of Kingdom building.

Old Church Building Inadequate

Many of our rural churches still consist of a small four-cornered one-room building. These were sufficient for their time, but now belong to an age that has passed. This situation constitutes a challenge, which calls for a new type of building adapted for worship, Christian education, recreation and service. This type of program cannot be carried out in a one-room building, where a dozen Sunday school classes are attempting to study and recite at the same time. Perhaps the function of the rural church needs to be restated. The Church and Country Life Commission of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ of America, in a gathering at Columbus, Ohio, stated the function of the rural church, thus:

God's great purpose for men is the highest possible development of each personality and of the human race as a whole. It is essential to its growth that men shall hold adequate ideals of character and life. The Christian believes that these ideals must spring from a clear appreciation of God's purpose, and from a consuming desire to reproduce the spirit and life of Christ. Therefore, the function of the country church is to create, to maintain, and to enlarge both individual and community ideals, after the inspiration and guidance of the Christian motive and teaching, and to help rural people to incarnate these ideals in personal and family life, in industrial effort, in political development, and in all social relationships. The church must bring men to God, and must lead in the task of building God's Kingdom on the earth. The mission of the

Christian church is that of its Founder: To teach the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as an ideal of life for the individual, the family, the community, and the nation, and to point out the best way to make the ideal the actual.¹

This function calls for knowledge, preaching and worship, Christian education, community service, business administration, cooperation with other churches and organizations and leadership training. The church must reach out into all community life and touch all its interests for the Kingdom. It must inject the spiritual values into the interests of everyday life. What can the old one-room church do with such a program? To serve its day and generation effectively and efficiently, the country church must have better buildings and equipment than it had in the days that have gone.

The New Rural Church Building

The location of a church house is as important in the country as in the city—in fact it is the first essential to the church's success. The blunder is often made in building a church on a lot someone has donated or which the church has purchased as a bargain, regardless of location. A church building should be so located as to be accessible to the neighborhood, occupy a strategic place in the life and activities of the people, a natural community center, near a schoolhouse, where the ground is fertile and productive. The location should be large enough so as not to cramp and limit Christian activities. There should be room for outdoor meetings, festivals, tennis and athletics on the church grounds. While an architect is a mighty important man in the construction of a serviceable church building, his task is not to be considered here, but there are things the modern rural church building must have. At the very least, the country church should have a commodious and beautiful sanctuary and a number of private Sunday-school rooms on the first floor. The basement of the church should be well-ventilated and lighted. This means that the builders will not go down very deep into the earth in basement construction. A good and a convenient water system with sanitary facilities is essential to every church basement. A large and well-equipped kitchen, dining room, lecture room, and storage room are necessary. In this way, the basement can accommo-

¹Edmund D. Brunner—The New Country Church Building, p. 19, "God's Great Purpose."

date all good social occasions of the community. A rural church can profitably have a convenient and comfortable room for a church library of good books, magazines, papers and other reading matter. To the supply of good literature, there should be constant additions.

Church Grounds

The church should be the most attractive building in the community. It is different from all other buildings and is in a class by itself. It must be kept in good repair, painted, decorated, clean and inviting to its members and strangers. The people can then "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." The condition of the building and grounds testify for or against its members and community. However costly the materials of a church building may be, their values are largely lost if surrounded by poorly kept grounds. There is no excuse for the disgraceful neglect of some rural church grounds. In some communities the church lawns have grown up in weeds and others are seldom mowed. They are barren of flowers and shrubbery, fences are down, and stray livestock find good pasture on the lawn. Walks to the church doors are often in a bad state of repair and the approach to them is almost impossible by automobile. The country church, above all, should have an attractive yard. The grounds of the rural church building may be landscaped in a most beautiful way. State agricultural colleges are glad to assist in landscaping where a church has interest enough to ask for their services. Both God and nature are ready to help "make all things beautiful." Why not give Him a chance to show His love through flowers, shrubbery and trees? Bible classes will be glad to plant and care for flower beds on the church lawns. Orderliness and beauty have a silent but increasing influence on a community for God and for good, and are testimonies of the real pride that people have in their church home.

The Rural Parsonage

God's minister and administrator must be comfortably housed. This matter has been last to receive attention in many rural sections. There is no uniformity of parsonages; hence, moving from one rural parsonage to another is quite costly to the minister. Some rural parsonages are now modern, a large number semi-modern, and others haven't even a basement under them. A modern rural parsonage provides a home and

family comforts for the pastor and family. Few pastors have homes of their own, until they are too old to enjoy them. A rural pastor's work is strenuous, his responsibilities are heavy; with his family he needs a quiet and comfortable home for meditation and study. The pastor's wife is always anxious to know just what kind of a parsonage their new home is to be. Will it be conveniently arranged, is it small or large, is it a warm or a cold house? These are her major concerns when moving. A pastor's home should be exemplary and the social life ideal. He will have many meetings and social functions in his own home, where his people will see and hear, and perchance some of them criticize. His wife should be a good housekeeper and hospitality should be one of the chief virtues of the parsonage.

The kind of a building a congregation provides for its pastor always reflects its character. It is their evidence of the worth of the pastor and family to the church and the appreciation of his services. No man doing God's work can be paid in dollars and cents for it, but in appreciation he can be furnished a good home and a decent living. The parsonage also represents the standing of the pastor in the community. All society is open to him for service. He is the most valuable citizen of any community. A modern parsonage is a distinct asset to the community, a token of community pride and blessing. Trustees often neglect the upkeep and repairs of the rural parsonage. This is a decided loss to the church and the cause. Where buildings are kept up, people will go to worship. They will shun the old and dilapidated for the new and modern. God's man always favors a community uplift and often gives of his own means to make things attractive about the parsonage and church.

A modern home for the rural pastor speaks of the proper relationships between the material things of the parish and the Kingdom. The church is a steward of its possessions and should make good use of them. No church can be saintly and stingy at the same time. Sharing is a great privilege; as we give, we live; as we give, we save. Sincere Christians will not live in modern homes, drive expensive cars, and be content to have their pastor living in a house that belongs to ages past. They will provide a Bethany Home for the Man of God, where the altar fires are burning and the Good Shepherd may go in and out.

The Rural Parish House

The solution to the problem of wider rural community interests is the rural Parish House. Leaders of authority, such as Dr. Warren H. Wilson,¹ believe that the parsonage should include large rooms for social purposes where the problem of supervision is solved by the pastor and wife being in the building. This would involve considerable improvements in the parsonage by way of public rooms and a place of retreat for the pastor's wife and children. The success of this plan depends largely upon the spirit of the pastor and the strength of his noble wife, the mother of the manse. The plan has many decided advantages.

The Parish House, as a separate building in a community under the control of church people, irrespective of denominations, can be made a powerful agent for good in any community. Equipment for the building may be secured by gifts from friends, entertainments and social gatherings. The Parish House should be open regularly one evening a week for a diversified program. It is a meeting place for young people and old; a community center for farmers, miners and foreigners, to share a common life. The building should have a large auditorium, stage, gymnasium, bath and dressing rooms in the basement, and a well-equipped kitchen. The auditorium should be used for preaching services, Ladies' Aid Society meetings, lectures, entertainments, farm bureau meetings, farm institutes, teachers' institutes, literary societies, school commencements, union revival meetings, special occasions, community Christmas entertainments, Children's Day programs, county Sunday school conventions, Bible classes, festivals, basketball games, and whatever is for the general welfare of the church and the community. The problem of supervision must be met firmly and tactfully; nothing below Christian ideals and activities should be tolerated.

The securing of a Parish House may seem difficult and expensive. It is a community affair even when under the control of only one church and its circle of contributors is large. Much can be expected from volunteer labor. Many a barn has been transformed into a parish house, with the actual outlay of money not exceeding \$1,000.00. The task can be performed when the motives are Christian.

¹Edmund D. Brunner—The New Country Church Building, Doctor Wilson, p. 63.

Remodeling Old Buildings

New churches, parsonages and parish houses are always desirable, but congregations have old buildings on their hands, which have cost considerable time, energy and sacrifice, and they must be content with rebuilding the old house to meet the growing needs of their respective communities. Rebuilding an old structure is sometimes a wasteful and expensive affair. Much money may be spent in beautifying an old house without any consideration of serving the needs of its community. A social survey to help determine the needs of the community, should be made before a building is rebuilt. The edifice should be made so as to be of the greatest possible service in meeting the needs revealed by the survey.

Rebuild so as to meet the needs of little children. Motherhood must not be penalized by the church. Make "room in the Inn" for babies; have a nursery. Two or more mothers can look after all the children, while other mothers worship and enjoy the Sunday school session. Rebuild so as to meet the needs of boys and girls who sometimes are forgotten by the church and drift into sin and vice.

Three methods of rebuilding the country church are: (1) build an actual addition, (2) dig out the basement still further, and (3) raise up the church; a combination of these methods gives larger floor space and a better basement.

Thousands of rural churches have come to the crossroads of a rebuilding program. Their decision will determine their future. The budget of every rural church should include a designated amount of funds for alterations and additions to the church building. Little has been done to change the rural church house to meet growing needs during the last quarter of a century. The church that has done something about adequate building and equipment, has brought a new awakening in the life of the community. The day of the one-room church house has passed forever. We must provide rooms for worship, Christian education, social functions and recreation. Some progress has been made in recent years. We can help hasten the day, when adequate building and equipment will adorn our churches and serve our day and generation by developing the moral and religious life of the rural community.

CHAPTER VIII

FELLOWSHIP AND RECREATION

The farmer has been charged with living in isolation. Today rural young people and adults play the least and need it the most of any group. Rural people need recreation just as much as the city people do, but of a different kind. They need a change from the routine of farm work. Country folks are as capable of social function as any other groups.

Old Time Rural Fellowship and Recreation

Our fathers speak of the good old days on the farm. Forms of rural fellowship different from those of today were enjoyed immensely. They consisted largely of sleigh rides, hay rides, husking bees, autumn festivals, summer picnics, reunions, bobsleddings to revival meetings, quilting and sewing parties, apple butter cookings, butcherings, cider makings, wood cuttings, maple sugar camps, etc. There was always a large crowd at barn raisings, which seemed to be both a duty and joy to the whole rural community. All these cooperative efforts grew largely out of working conditions. They furnished valuable social contacts. When the telephone, improved roads and transportation, and other modern conveniences came, rural people gradually abandoned these social functions in which all participated and enjoyed and went to the towns and cities to be entertained. For more than two decades city commercial amusements have made a strong pull for rural youth, and have gotten them.

The Present Situation

The present rural fellowship and recreational situation is not what it should be or is it hopeless. Many rural folks are prejudiced against recreation. Some of them will not permit their sons to play basketball in high school, because they get enough exercise at home and basketball is too violent and dangerous. Their sons think otherwise, and may have been star players on their teams. Farmers hold that work is the

supreme end of rural life and that it furnishes sufficient recreation. They drive to the city for commercialized entertainment. This type of entertainment exists for profits only; it does not consider moral values or the works of righteousness; it is not building a better world, but tearing down what the church is striving to build. It is seldom good. Commercialized entertainment is the biggest industry of today. It is a constant Sabbath breaker. This is a day of "bleacheritis." Crowds merely sit and look on; they are not participants in the game; they just pay their money and sit to be exploited. The city continues to furnish commercial recreation for the rural people.

One-fifth of the population of the United States attends a commercialized amusement for recreation daily and the majority of these are between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five. Three-fourths of those in pool rooms are under twenty-one years of age. These surveys have covered city, town and country, but these facts stress the importance of well-directed rural organization for rural youth.¹

The situation is being improved by junior character building agencies, which are entering the rural fields. The rapid increase of consolidation of schools and recreational programs is improving rural education. The Playground and Recreational Association of America has put two full time men in rural fields to cooperate with 4-H organization. Club leaders are doing a fine and lasting piece of work. Normal colleges, schools and universities are uncluding courses of study and training in play leadership. We are on the right road to solve the fellowship and recreation problems of rural people.

The Task of the Church

The trend of flocking to the city for recreation must be changed to the developing of fellowship and recreation programs in the rural communities. Rural pastors and Sunday school workers will do well to capitalize the 4-H Club movement for the church. Its motto is, "To Make the Best Better"; it aims to develop the physical, mental, social and spiritual natures along with skill in application. Local leaders for the movement are needed. To foster its ideals and program, leadership of the organization should be Christian. This is a challenge that the country church should accept. Recent sur-

¹H. W. McLaughlin—The Country Church and Public Affairs, p. 205.

veys in the state of Virginia show that only 2.9% of the 1033 rural pastors of that state are actively supporting 4-H Club work. In commenting on the Edgewood Plan, where a number of Methodist churches of Texas have actively undertaken to foster 4-H Club work, Dr. McLaughlin says,

The plan is God's plan. It calls for tithes of labor and harvest. It is not strange that the Texas Conference paid 86% of its Conference claims last year, since the rural churches are using the Edgewood plan.¹

Play life for city youth has been given much concern and a lot has been done about it, but for rural youth there has been no adequate program of recreation undertaken. Our country boys and girls have been left largely to shift for themselves along these lines. The church should not be proud of the fact that what has been done for rural youth along lines of recreation has been done by outside sources. Rural parents have been too busy to play with their children, furnish them a place to play or even consider play as a part of life's program. Many rural pastors have felt that recreation was a matter wholly outside of church activities. Strange to say that only in the last decade have seminaries given much attention to the play life of the church to the student for the ministry. All of life is religious. A sound body, a sound mind and a strong mind, and a strong spiritual nature should be the ideal of Christian training. The rural church must go into the business of providing wholesome recreation for its youth. God knows something must be done about it, and we know, also we no longer dare leave our rural young folks to find their pleasures or to get recreation wherever they can, regardless, of what type and character it may be.

The Program

The church must not shirk its responsibility any longer. Properly directed recreation by the church will furnish golden opportunities to build into young lives the qualities of friendliness, courage, cooperation, sympathy, fairness, decision and unselfishness. Such a program will both attract and serve rural youth. In building a recreation program the needs of youth must have first consideration. The church must serve rural youth. The program principle should not be to build up the church, but to serve rural youth. Our young people

¹H. W. McLaughlin—The Country Church and Public Affairs, p. 209.

should grow up normally as Jesus did. "And Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man."¹ In the recreation program, let it always be remembered that Christian standards need not and must not be compromised for a successful recreational program. Program essentials are as follows:

1. Secure an adequate organization to supervise your recreation. Have a small committee appointed by the Official Board of the church, which will be held responsible for the whole program of fellowship and recreation. Members of this committee should be chosen from the various departments of the church and Sunday school.

2. Tasks must be defined and activities selected to reach these aims. The recreational program should be graded so as to meet the needs of all ages and make a contribution to the whole life of all participants. This will not be an easy task to perform, but it is necessarily a wise one.

3. Directors of recreation must be carefully selected. The Director of Christian Education, if of the proper type and attitude, may well serve this place. Sometimes volunteer workers, who have had some training along these lines and are interested in building character, serve quite acceptably.

4. The church must provide the proper equipment for recreational purposes. Since much play will be in the out-of-doors, equipment need not be elaborate or call for a large outlay of capital. However, some equipment will be absolutely necessary. For indoor play and fellowship, the Parish House discussed in Problem 7, will be ideal.

Older Groups

There has been no particular place given or emphasis placed on the need of fellowship and recreation for rural young married folks, middle aged rural people and older ones. These groups shared largely in the "Old Time Rural Recreation" mentioned at the beginning of this discussion. All of us need to play; we need one another; our spirits must be kept alive; our outlook bright; our spirits joyful; hence, we must fellowship and play. In the open country, people may live apart geographically, but they need not live apart in spirit. Play for these older groups will not be so strenuous as for young

people and not so much to win as just for the joy of play. Activities suggested are in the form of organized class meetings, congregational dinners, brotherhood meetings, autumn frolics, home comings, Sunday school picnics, harvest jubilees, horse shoe games, softball games, croquet, etc. What better can the church do than to capitalize on special days and seasons? Play will help all and all can play. Wherever the church has properly provided fellowship and recreation for its members and community, there has been an increasing enthusiasm, larger attendance at all church services, a growing membership, increased financial gains and spiritual advancement.

¹Luke 2:52.

CHAPTER IX

RURAL YOUTH

This is perhaps the most important of all problems of the series to be discussed. Inability to adequately deal with it in this brief way, is freely admitted. It is hoped, however, that some helpful contribution to deal with the problem will be made. Rural youth holds the key to the rural situation in all of its phases and ramifications. Rural youth must rebuild the rural church; take the new rural program and attack the problems of the country church with intelligence and vigor. No greater challenge has ever faced a generation to bring about, "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Rural youth has unlimited resources, talents and abilities waiting to be disciplined and harnessed for the Master's glory. They have "come to the Kingdom for a time like this."

Rural Trends and Opportunities

In the splendid book, "God's Will Be Done in the Community," and in the chapter given to the rural church, Dr. O. O. Arnold, discussing rural changes says:

During the decade from 1920 to 1929, eighteen million persons, mostly young people, moved from the country to the city. These were usually the cream of the crop—the youth with the most initiative, ambition and education. This movement continues to the limit of the cities' capacity to use and pay young people. Parents visit their young people, who have moved to the city, and this visiting takes time and interest away from the local church and community. . . . There is a migration of about two millions per year from the city to the country. These people are moving into areas within driving distance of industrial centers and plan part-time farming. They are often building shack homes that make a rural slum. They often bring people of a different religion and culture, and present to many of our rural churches and communities, a challenge and a problem. . . . More of the first quality youth must be saved to the rural community. There must be provided for them there, a chance for work, to make a living and have a home, a place in the com-

munity life and sometimes a farm. The ladder of farm ownership must be repaired.¹

Many of these going to the city do not identify themselves with any church, and are, therefore, lost to the church and kingdom. Others retain their church membership in the country church and wander about from church to church in the city. Dr. Edwin Sundt, in his valuable book, "The Country Church and Our Generation," startles us with the statement, "We have been reminded that there are 5,000,000 country young people outside of the rural church. Often this disinterestedness in the church is justifiable."² Here is a vast field "white unto the harvest" for evangelism and Christian education. Why these young people have not been won to Christ and His church and enlisted in sacrificial and joyful service, is a problem to which we should give the most sanctified intelligence and planning. Has our appeal to rural youth been too narrow and conventional, has it lacked the dynamic appeal to a life of service and usefulness? This situation should be pondered prayerfully.

Winning Rural Youth

Preaching, evangelistic and educational as it may be, has not been sufficient to capture and hold rural youth. It is, however, the primary task of the church to preach and teach the Word of God. The appeal to rural youth must have a broader basis. Let the church provide an adequate substitute for the dance hall and pool room in the form of a Christian recreational center, with a Christian social program, and thus supplement preaching and teaching in winning youth to Christ and His church. Young people should have a more vital part in Christian education; our programs in this field are many times too conventional and formal; they should deal with life situations and interests; sincere praying should be encouraged, regardless of proper English; and there should be hearty participation and sharing of responsibilities of the church. Summer Leadership Training Camps are an invaluable help to rural young people. Here they are brought face to face with themselves—a decision for Christ and enlistment in His work. Wholesome social functions are always helpful to young people. They should further have cooperative projects to work out, such as visit shut-ins; help in the rural Sunday school;

¹O. O. Arnold—*Doing the Will of God in the Community*, pp. 27-28-29.

²Sundt—*The Country Church and Our Generation*, p. 110.

and managing play centers. Christian Endeavor societies can be a great help to the pastor and the community. Young people should assume a definite moral and financial responsibility to the church as individual church members. Where the church has failed to train its members for Christian living by systematic study of the Christian life and what God requires of Christian people, church membership is regarded as a cheap affair. This is the work of Christian education.

Enlisting Rural Youth in Community Service

The laymen of the church are constantly saying to the stationing committee, "We want a pastor, who can interest and hold our young people." Many churches that have become alarmed about the condition of their young people are anxious to do something for them. Certainly the church exists to serve its youth; the burden of these discussions has had to do with rightly providing for young people. We owe them our love, a wholesome Christian influence, our constant prayers, counsel, a good example and undying interest in their welfare. Many books and sermons have had to do with serving our youth. But how much are we doing to inspire in our rural young people the spirit and life of service? Youth must be challenged to adventure and achievements. The Boy and Girl Scouts and 4-H movements challenge their members with lofty ideals and worthwhile achievements. The church must cooperate with these agencies and re-enforce them with the transforming power of the gospel of Christ. Young people, whether in the city or country, will respond to any reasonable challenge that requires time and energy; they are not attracted by easy and childish things. Exercise is a law of growth. Young people grow by serving. A movement of recent origin is the project of developing rural parks and making communities beauty spots of America. The planting of trees and shrubbery and flowers on rural church lawns, which has already been mentioned make good projects for youth organizations of the church.

The salvation of America depends upon having a sufficient number of Christian rural communities. The country church must function vigorously to redeem the community and to keep it soundly Christian. Young people's organizations have been given the responsibility of providing the publicity and special music for revival meetings and have done so with

credit to themselves and a splendid contribution to the meeting. Many of the outstanding present day leaders of all denominations look back to the first responsibility they were given in the local church as the beginning of their active Christian life. Dr. J. Gordon Howard, associate editor of United Brethren Sunday-school publications, is credited with the statement of youth, "Use me or lose me." Youth is being challenged to furnish rural communities where crime and divorces are unknown. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior in President Wilson's Cabinet, in speaking of Prince Edward Island said, "I know of no other place that has a higher standard of morality and no people that take a greater pride in their homes. These results are due to their excellent country churches."¹

Farming an Honorable Vocation

Farming is an honorable calling. Many of us, who left the farm for one reason or another, have found no place so satisfying and independent. We can serve God anywhere, but to a greater extent in the open country and there work with others in building the Kingdom in rural communities. There are often criticisms to choosing the open country as a life vocation, with such isolation as exists in a mild form, lack of society, long days, too much quiet, inconveniences, (farmers now have many modern conveniences), and a lack of recognition, etc. The open country provides the best home life, freedom and independence. The farmer's work is not being inspected by officials or is his clock turned on his hour of labor. His life has the least contacts with sin and the most opportunities to meditate and commune with God. He labors all day long in the very midst of God's handiwork and sleeps at night in the quiet of nature. His is a health giving life, peace without competition, and ideal family life about the hearth. Mark A. Dawber says,

The farm is not primarily a place to make money, but a place to live. Its equilibrium of economic, social and religious forces must not be at the mercy of unruly profit-serving forces whose pressure disturbs its balance. The church must help to resist these disturbing forces and their fickle, unreasonable demands.²

¹McLaughlin—The Country Church and Public Affairs, p. 248.
²Dawber—Rebuilding Rural America, p. 42.

This philosophy of farm life will find response in the hearts of most rural people. Thomas Jefferson said on one occasion,

Cultivators of earth make the best citizens. They are the most virtuous and the most independent. They are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests with the most lasting bonds. As long, therefore, as they can find employment in that line, I would not council them to be mariners, artisans or anything else.¹

¹Dawber—Rebuilding Rural America, p. 46 "Thomas Jeff."

CHAPTER X

RURAL CHURCH PUBLICITY

Jesus and the apostles were proficient in advertising the Christian message. Their methods were unique and effective. John, the Baptist, "a voice crying in the wilderness," drew the crowds and obtained results. Christ's miracles were the current topics of the day; his parables were powerful and unforgettable pictures, teaching great spiritual lessons. Many of them had to do with the soil and rural life. The Book of Acts records the spread of Christian propaganda from Jerusalem to Rome. The thirteen epistles of St. Paul were sent to the churches of Europe and Asia. The church fathers worked untiringly to spread the gospel message; many translators of the Bible died as martyrs. We are indebted to all the faithful saints who have gone before. We must use every legitimate method to make Christ known to men today. It pays to advertise.

The Purpose of Rural Church Publicity

Many rural churches do not even carry a name, to say nothing of the hours of service, sermon subjects and the residence of the pastor. Passersby cannot tell their denomination and faith. The rural church needs up-to-date publicity as well as does the city church. It need not be on such a large scale, methods may differ, but the purpose of church publicity is ever the same. Rural people have deep spiritual longings and needs; and these, the church must endeavor to meet. Dr. Francis H. Case gives the six leading purposes of church publicity to be:

1. To enlarge its membership.
2. To inspire its present members.
3. To cooperate in the united evangelical campaigns of the other churches of your community.
4. To deepen the influence of the church in the community.
5. To get the unchurched element thinking.
6. To keep abreast of modern times.¹

Advertising the rural church should never be motivated by narrow sectarianism or denominational rivalry and jealousy.

¹Case—Advertising the Church, p. 31.

We spend too much time in competing, instead of cooperating. This unchristian situation is sometimes quite pronounced and embedded in small towns. We must work together against a common foe.

Pastor—Salesman

Salesmanship in every field is a matter of service. Selling the church idea is the task of church people. It is the rural pastor who best knows the church, its message and program, and above all man is the most vitally interested in its proper functioning. He should be familiar with the principles of church publicity. Up-to-date books on the subject at hand are always available. The methods of pastors, who are successful in this field, may also be studied with profit. In the average rural church the pastor will be able to do practically all the work of advertising, and when the mails are used heavily at special seasons volunteer aid from the church will gladly come to his help. It is well for all pastors to cultivate the friendship of newspaper men.

Goods to be Sold

Church "ads" must be more than mere billboards announcing dates and church activities. They must have a genuine Christian message for the uninterested in the community. This message must be interesting, gripping and always leading to right conclusions. It should be evangelistic in content and aim. The preacher and plant are of secondary consideration, but should always go with the ad. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."¹ Proper advertising will not only help the church that is doing it, but will aid in creating interest in all Christian activities. The advertisement should be brief and give right impressions to outsiders. Truth should be the key word of all church publicity. For the sake of the stranger, the location of the church and hours of service should always be given.

Channels of Publicity

Christianity is constantly bringing about new ways, methods, and channels of spreading its message. Rural churches should have signboards erected at nearby crossroads, giving name of church and hours of services. Every rural church should have a clear ringing, deep-toned church bell, that

sends out its call at stated hours. Since preaching is the supreme task of the Christian ministry, the pulpit remains the outstanding channel of church advertising. Radio preaching should never be substituted for regular church services, although it is helpful to shut-ins and reaches a large number of them over the land. Direct mail, including letters, parish papers, and other periodicals, forms ties that bind. The weekly church bulletin is economical, efficient and satisfying.

Many rural pastors are using duplicators, which their churches have purchased for them to great advantage. Once a church is accustomed to a weekly bulletin, it will seldom, if ever, do without one. The outdoor, electrically illumined bulletin board, which has been called "The wayside pulpit," performs a creditable work for autoists and pedestrians. Newspapers are largely used for church publicity. The rural pastor will get his Sunday church notes in these channels at least once a week.

The moving picture agency of today should be used to serve the church of the living God. Too long it has served Mammon. Stereopticon and film slides are informing and educational—especially for missionary work. Children will get the picture message, and older ones get more out of it than they do from addresses. Not all the avenues here suggested will be used by every rural church in its advertising, but experience has proved that it pays vastly to keep the program of the church before the people.

Buildings and Grounds

Several times in these discussions the importance of attractive appearance of the church building and grounds has been mentioned; it should further be treated as a matter of good advertising; it indicates the spiritual thermometer of the congregation. The buildings must never be allowed to deteriorate or have an appearance of belonging to the age just past. A coat of paint will not only add to the attractiveness of the building, but is a measure of economy as well. Flower beds, shrubbery, hedges and other adornments must be kept in a healthy condition, as they make beautiful the outer courts of the temple of God. The bulletin board should be kept from growing old by annual coats of painting; the letters clean and unsoiled. People love to attend church where everything is beautiful without and within.

¹II Corinthians 4:5.

CHAPTER XI

HOME MISSIONS AND THE RURAL CHURCH

Home mission boards have been wide awake to the needs of the rural church for more than a quarter of a century and stand ready to cooperate in an educational program of the various Annual Conferences in this great field. Both churchmen and statesmen have been making careful study of the rural life of America, with a view of developing it.

Some Discoveries and Problems

After making extended investigations into the needs of rural fields, our Home Mission Board has made some vital discoveries and confronted some difficult problems. Taking the denomination over, very little organizational work has been done in the rural sections to serve the community in a large way. Rural churches have been operating on too narrow a basis; Sunday school and preaching services have constituted the major portion of the work of the rural church. Social and community welfare problems have been given little attention and consideration. Many rural churches are still carrying on in a one-room building with cramped conditions and very little equipment for Christian Education. As a result, dangers have threatened the very existence of the rural church. It has stood still while the rest of the world has moved on with scientific attainments and modern program. To avert further dangers, most denominations through their Home Mission Boards have taken some positive steps to redeem and develop their rural churches. The difficult problems at hand require an educational program and training that will be a slow but most certain process. The possibilities of the rural church, and what such developments would mean to it, must be made clear to its members and community. Where this has been done, most gratifying results have been obtained.

Cooperating Agencies

The first and most important organization to lead in this task is the Conference Superintendent and the Conference

Board of Administration. Planning and directing the work must be in the hands of this organization. As it has done home mission work in the cities in organizing churches and erecting buildings, it must carry on in the annual conference. The Conference Board of Home Missions and Church Erection should be vitally active in the rural work of the Conference. Whatever the denominational Board of Home Missions and Church Erection does in the program of developing the rural church, it must do through the conference organization and in cooperation with it. In most rural projects, both must take an active part to secure adequate buildings, equipment and leadership. To make the work a real success, the whole church must cooperate with these two agencies. The Conference Board of Christian Education and the Rural Life Commission of the Conference will "come to the help of the Lord against the mighty" in a challenging program of advance. The developed rural church will soon become a factor in American christianization and welfare. Above most denominations, our church should be most vitally active in the work of rural redemption, because so large a percentage of our membership is in rural sections. Our responsibility in this task is large.

A Comprehensive Program

Without a clearly defined and progressive program, the Home Mission and Church Erection Board would not be justified in appropriating funds and furnishing leadership for rural work. The aim is not simply to maintain the rural work, but to develop it physically, socially, intellectually and spiritually, so the work will maintain itself with sufficiency and joy. We cannot afford to let the rural church become a lesser factor in our denominational life. We look to it to recruit the Christian ministry, teaching and missionary leadership. If the rural church loses its place in the denominational life of the nation's churches, the source of Christian leadership would be cut off. We are constantly needing sturdy, courageous and sacrificial young men and women, who have the spirit of Christ for others. Our program must include social life and functions for both young and old, educational work that will reach the last person in the community and develop a rural culture that is so much needed.

Leadership

The beginning of developing rural life in the modern way must be simple and will proceed rather slowly. Rural folks do not take to new things quickly. They must have the utmost confidence in their leadership before they will venture with him. The first essential, then, in carrying out a comprehensive program is leadership. This leadership must be imbued with the spirit of Jesus Christ and have a vision of the task as it is, as it ought to be and what will be required to make it so; a generous supply of common sense; patience combined with progressiveness; courage of convictions; and willingness to sacrifice as well as to succeed. With such leadership, and adequate building and equipment, success is certain to come. This same type of leadership should be at the head of all the departments of the church.

A City Approach

All rural work is related closely to city work. That relationship has been discussed elsewhere in these writings. Believing it essential for the developing of rural work, the Home Mission Board has a fixed program and has adopted the following policy: 1. A rural missionary church must have claims of real need, with a sufficient field to guarantee self-support in a reasonable time. 2. Rural mission churches must have, wherever possible, some approach to a city church of our own denomination. 3. In order to receive home missionary encouragement and support, rural churches must put on the standard plan work in pastoral efficiency, adequate building and equipment and program. 4. Annual conferences desiring assistance in developing a rural church, whose city approach does not have a church of our denomination, will be asked to open a church for the sake of the rural church. The developing of our rural churches is as necessary as the Christianizing of our cities. One cannot be done without the other.

Conference Organizations and the Rural Church

Conference organizations can do much towards the developing of the rural churches. They must give place in their promotional work to the rural church. Our Home Mission and Church Erection Board, Board of Christian Education, Rural Life Commission, Women's Missionary Society, Commission on Evangelism, Annual Conference Trustees, Laymen's Associa-

tion, Ministerial Institute and Young People's Council of Christian Education, must give place to the rural church in their planning and program. Where this is done, response can be expected by way of finances and service. The Conference Superintendent and Pastors of rural communities must see to it that new methods, suited to the needs of the day, are used and a progressive program of rural advancement is inaugurated and put over. Not only will the rural church go forward, but a definite contribution will be made to American home missions.

The Challenge of Home Missions Today

In the Fifteenth Annual Report of Home Missions and Church Erection Society of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, made December 31, 1939, the General Secretary, Dr. U. P. Hovermale, says, "The superstructure of our governmental and institutional life rests upon foundations laid by organized Christianity. Our forefathers believed that for a nation to endure, it must be founded upon moral and spiritual foundations. These early heroes were both patriots and preachers, and rendered a joint service to God and country during the formative period of our national life. Truly their conviction was, 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.'" What a heritage is ours!

Today something has happened to cause statesmen, as well as churchmen, to voice the fear that America is becoming progressively and increasingly pagan. Almost 60% of our nation's population is without the church of Jesus Christ, of whom 27,000,000 are children and young people unrelated to any organized ministry. Social evils are increasing and the nation's liquor bill now equals almost one-half as much as it spends for food, shelter and clothing; our crime bill amounts to 15 billion dollars a year. With vast areas of our city and rural sections being neglected without the church; with the increasing millions of people coming from all parts of the world with their varied background of racial traditions, social customs, religious beliefs and pagan philosophies; with our unwholesome industrial system that deprives millions from earning their daily bread; and with a multitude of other destructive forces influencing the life of America, all these bring a new challenge to the church.

The United Brethren Church has always been a missionary church. Her missionary passion impelled her westward, and northwestward and southwestward into thirty-four states in our own country and led her to establish five foreign mission posts. The combined membership of our mission churches, at home and abroad, is more than 35,000 and a Sunday School enrollment of over 30,000. The needs and conditions today challenge our church to a new advance. If our church had a divine purpose in the beginning, as we truly believe it had, surely it has a just share in the Christian conquest of America today. In proportion as America becomes genuinely Christian, as loyalty to Christ and His program permeate the life of the whole people, will we be able to evangelize the world."

Denominational Loyalty

Little or nothing has been said thus far about denominations as such—their significance and importance in organized Christianity. In order to successfully rebuild the rural church, maintain and develop it so that it may serve its community in a larger way, it must be a part of some aggressive and powerful denomination. It cannot rebuild, maintain and develop itself alone. All leading denominations are coming to the rescue of their rural churches through their home mission departments as far as funds will permit.

The Denominational Function

While a number of denominations have merged with profit to themselves and Christianity, and perhaps more of the smaller denominations should merge, organic unity does not lie within the field of this discussion. However, denominations can and should always display Christian unity, cooperation and brotherhood. Each denomination serves as a unit in one great whole of organized Christianity. Like individuals, each denomination must master a specific part of the interdenominational program in order to claim its rightful place in promoting the kingdom of God. That such privileges may be abused and a church body fail in its God-given mission, is entirely possible. The denominations being considered here, are those who see the mighty challenge of the rural church of today and are helping provide leadership, adequate buildings, equipment and power for the task.

The credentials of the United Brethren Church are: An inner Christian experience known as the new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit, a fervent missionary spirit and a comprehensive program of action. No denomination is more rural than ours, and this is the first qualification for promotion of this branch of work. We must endeavor to pay the denominational debt to our rural constituency, and at the same time do our part in answering the clarion call to united Protestantism and our national welfare. Our loyalty must be without bigotry, jealousy and rivalry, "We are not divided, all one body we, one in hope and doctrine, one in charity." The day requires a united front and a steady advance that "the gates of hell" cannot resist.

Loyalty Needed

The work of our founder, Philip William Otterbein, was among German speaking people. This is why the history of our church was so largely rural. From the place of origin in Pennsylvania and Maryland, we moved westward throughout the length and breadth of the land. We are now functioning aggressively and victoriously in thirty-four states of our land and have posts in five foreign countries. Every denomination has an interesting history of its origin, social and religious conditions that brought about its beginnings, growth, development and leadership. To properly understand what one's church is trying to do today, he should be familiar with its past and should understand its present status and program. Every church member should know the church to which he belongs. No one can pray and give intelligently to that with which he is not familiar. Intelligence is necessary for hearty cooperation in anything. It has often been said that people who are informed will perform.

Like all other churches, we have many loyal followers, but also have our share of folks whose church membership is a cheap affair. That explains the reason for one-half of our people not being vitally interested and active in the work of our denomination. Some of them do not support the church either with their presence or their gifts; others zealously give to the tabernacle racket of larger cities; some object to benevolence apportionments, are stingy, faultfinding and critical; many are prejudiced to missions, "plenty of heathen here at home," say they; others object to anything new by way of

method and program and a few long for the "good old days." This situation in some form obtains in practically all denominations.

What are the underlying causes contributing to these conditions in our churches? Some will say, that these people never were born again in the first place and nothing by way of support can be expected of them; others will say, that the era of "gold brick" evangelists (which thank God has to a large degree passed) was responsible for so many people joining church without a Christian experience. There is some truth in both of these assertions, but the great majority of these people are Christians, good citizens and neighbors, and the fact remains that their Christian lives have not been developed. Christian education has not been given a chance to do its work. These brethren stopped at conversion and have been marking time ever since. The evil of it lies at the doors of the church. There must be a study course given all new converts of the meaning of the Christian life and church membership; they must be linked up with the various devotional, social and educational activities of the church.

Loyalty Obtained

Having already suggested the cause and remedy, we will go further into the subject. We cannot separate Jesus Christ and His church anymore than we can separate the building from the architect. Christ demands our loyalty above the clash of all other loyalties. His church has claim on our time, talents and things. The particular denomination, to which we belong, calls for our undivided selves. We "cannot serve two masters." We work for Christ in an organized way through our denomination and at the same time rejoice in the success of all Christian churches and join with them in united efforts to advance His Kingdom. To deepen denominational loyalty, there must be instruction classes for the Christian life and the church for all ages and for new converts and old. Every denomination provides courses in this field. The study of church history in general, and of one's own church in particular, is indispensable. Information of our denominational history and polity must be given from the pulpit and other educational agencies. A United Brethren Discipline should be placed in every church home, read and studied. The Confession of Faith found therein has no superior. The Religious Telescope, The Watchword,

The Evangel and other informational and inspirational periodicals should be available and read freely by our people. Several times during the year, sermons should be preached on the United Brethren Church. Regular church attendance, conventions, rallies, conferences, leadership training schools and worship in the home, all help in making our constituency a loyal and supporting one. Pastors have been the means of enlisting the loyalty of more of their people by making trips with them to headquarters at Dayton, Ohio, where our Publishing House, U. B. Office Building and Bonebrake Theological Seminary are located. Also trips are made to our denominational orphanages and homes, and to our college campuses. The sessions of the Annual Conference are also great loyalty builders.

Evidences of a New Loyalty

The writer is keenly aware of the fact that there has been some repetition of building up new converts in the faith and developing denominational loyalty. This supports the fact that because there is disloyalty both negative and positive, the church has not properly developed its new converts. There is no other way of building up a constructive loyalty than through the program given; hence, repetition is but another emphasis on a fundamental requirement. Many of our pastors are following such a program of enlisting their people in the tasks of the church. There are signs of encouragement wherever there is a progressive and spiritual leadership. Laymen are saying we must pay our church claims in full and they are speaking and working to this end. There is a growing interest and participation on the part of laymen in evangelism and the sessions of the Annual Conference. In the quarterly gatherings of group conferences and age group rallies of Christian Education, crowds have doubled in the last few years. They know what it is all about now and want a part in pushing all of the work of the church forward. We are ceasing to be fractional Christians and are now looking at the church as a whole and not just some department of its work. There is a new appreciation of our church leaders and better local and benevolent support is being provided. Better buildings are in the process of being made for a progressive and comprehensive program. This year will mark twenty such projects in our Annual Conference. Laymen of the churches are plead-

ing for longer pastorates and this is a most healthy trend in the affairs of the Kingdom. All these encouraging trends, and more, lead us "To thank God and take courage."

PROGRAM OUTLINES FOR RURAL CHURCHES

1. *Personal and Cultural Evangelism*

A. Before the special effort

- (1) Prayer (personal and in groups).
 - (a) A praying spirit. Don't say prayers, pray.
 - (b) Daily intercession at the Family altars of the church.
 - (c) Organized prayer groups meeting in the various districts of the parish.
 - (d) A church prayer list.
 - (e) Individual prayer lists.
- (2) Canvass of the community.
 - (a) Purpose—To discover number of unsaved in community and determine goals.
 - (b) By whom? The pastor and carefully selected helpers going by two's.
 - (c) When? Preceding the special effort. Inform the people of date and place of meetings.
 - (d) Pray before visit. Tabulate results.
- (3) Training of workers (by the pastor). Based on Luke 10:1-10.
 - (a) Workers needed, v. 2.
 - (b) The field, v. 3.
 - (c) The spirit of the worker, vs. 5-8.
 - Self-denial
 - Diligence
 - Courtesy
 - Appreciation
 - (d) The message, v. 9b.
 - (e) Commissioned, v. 1.
 - (f) The joy, vs. 17-20.
- (4) Publicity (illustrations).
Inform community of location of church, name of pastor, hours of service, and schedule of campaign. Use an attractive outdoor bulletin board, streamers, posters in store windows, handbills, newspapers, and personal invitation cards.

B. During the special effort

- (1) Evangelism in regular church services
 - (a) The spirit of evangelism throughout the church.

- (b) A continuous program of educational evangelism.
- (c) Sunday night services—evangelistic, with appeals for definite decisions for Christ.
- (d) Decision days in the Sunday School and Christian Endeavor societies.
- (e) Family altars in the homes of the parish.
- (f) Pastors program of personal evangelism throughout year.
- (2) Special evangelistic services
 - (a) A definite season set aside for protracted effort.
 - (b) Sermons shaped so as to lead up to the special effort.
 - (c) Advance program of prayer and publicity for coming effort.
 - (d) The Evangelist? Preferably, the Pastor.
 - (e) The evangelistic message—Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.
 - (f) Power house prayer meeting, one-half hour preceding the services each night.
 - (g) Honor the Holy Spirit.
 - (h) Evangelistic music in charge of a godly chorister and a consecrated pianist.
 - (i) Testimony of saved people.
 - (j) After meetings.
- (3) Services for children
 - (a) Importance of winning children to Christ. They need Christ, are easy to win, make the best Christians and the whole life is saved for Christ.
 - (b) Children's meetings should be held during the special effort, in summer camps and during all seasons.
 - (c) Method used. Prayer is important, the message must be taught by consecrated Christian workers; be brief, simple, and well-illustrated. Instruction must follow decisions.
- C. After the special effort
 - (1) Worship service
 - Outline following types of worship services:
 - (a) Those that inspire reverence and consciousness of God.
 - Call to worship—Psalm 130:7.
 - Appropriate hymns—"Holy, Holy, Holy," "O Master, Let Me Walk," "I Gave My Life for Thee," and "Have Thine Own Way Lord."

- Psalm 8, followed by prayer.
- Anthem—"Hark, Hark My Soul"—Shelley.
- Offertory sentence.
- Offertory prayer.
- Scripture—Exodus 3:1-12.
- Sermon theme—"Finding God." Text, Exodus 3:3-5.
- Benediction.
- (b) A service that will inspire confession of sin, consecration and a desire to serve.
 - Call to worship—Psalm 66:1-2.
 - Hymns—"Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed," "Lord I Am Coming Home," "Just As I Am," and "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior."
 - Psalm 51, followed by prayer of confession.
 - Anthem—"Turn Ye Even Unto Me"—Harker.
 - Offertory sentence—Luke 19:10.
 - Offertory prayer.
 - Scripture—Luke 23:20-46.
 - Sermon theme—"Three Crosses." Text, Luke 15:27.
 - Hymn of confession.
 - Benediction.
- (c) A service that will inspire, comfort and encourage those who worship.
 - Call to worship—Matthew 5:6.
 - Psalm 46.
 - Appropriate hymns—"There's a Wideness," "Sweet Peace, the Gift," "Just When I Need Him," and "Blessed Assurance."
 - Anthem—"Great is the Lord"—Maunder.
 - Offertory sentence—I Cor. 15:58.
 - Offertory prayer.
 - Scripture—John 14:25-27, Eph. 2:11-22, followed by prayer.
 - Sermon theme—"God's Peace Program." Text, John 14:27.
 - Benediction—"The Lord bless thee and keep thee . . ."
- (2) Classes for instruction of converts and prospective church members.
 - (a) Materials for Juniors—"Manual for Christian Instruction for Juniors" by Dean C. E. Ashcraft, D.D., and "What Saith the Scriptures," by Paul Holdcraft, S.T.D.

- (b) Topics for Juniors—"What God Means to Me," "Jesus Christ, Our Savior," "Man Needs the Savior," "What It Means To Be a Christian," "How to Live the Christian Life," "Why Join the Church," "What Should a Church Member do?" and "How the Church Does its Larger Work."
- (c) Materials for older people—"The Christian Life" by C. W. Brewbaker, Ph.D.
- (d) Lesson topics—"The Christian's God," "Man's Need of Salvation," "Christ Our Savior," "The Bible," "Living the Christian Life," "Joining the Church," "My Life Work," "The Christian in Society," "The Christian's Rewards," and "The United Brethren Church."
- (3) Fields of service in the local church
The Sunday School, Mid-Week Service, Missionary Society, Ladies' Aid, Brotherhood, Finances, Stewardship, Social Service, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H Club, and Christian Endeavor.

2. Suggested Programs for Sunday Services

A. Study period (Sunday School)

- (1) Worship program of music, Scripture and prayer.
Time—15 minutes. Program carefully planned.
Period free from distractions. Hearty participation.
- (2) Instruction, thirty minutes, exclusive of all business.
(Purpose of instruction is an understanding of the Bible, personal decision for Christ, church membership, Christian conduct, and service.)
 - (a) The instructor must have both character and skill.
 - (b) Pupils' needs met by use of proper methods, discussion, etc.
- (3) Reassemble school—brief reports and statement by Sunday School Superintendent. Adjustment for worship service.
- (4) Service—Instruction must be completed in practice. We must take knowledge acquired and principles set forth into—
 - (a) The home.
 - (b) The morning church service.
 - (c) The community.
 - (d) World-wide service.

- B. Worship Period (church services)
Praise.
Prayer of invocation, followed by the Lord's prayer.
Responsive reading, followed by Gloria Patri.
Scripture and prayer.
Praise.
Offertory.
Anthem.
Sermon.
Hymn of consecration.
Benediction.
- C. Junior Church (when possible)
Theme—God Our Helper.
Order of service.
Familiar hymn about God's help.
A blackboard list of help we want from God.
Short stories about God's help.
Leader's talk.
Worship service.
Quiet music and silent prayer.
Call to worship—John 4:23.
Hymn: "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind."
Litany of Praises.
Hymn, "Father, Lead Me Day by Day."
Litany of petitions.
Offering.
Offertory prayer.
Benediction.

(Suggestions from Arlene W. Rust.)

3. Suggested Program for Mid-Week Church Night

- A. Social.
A Fellowship supper at 6:30. A brief period, at close of supper, for mass singing, getting acquainted and fellowship.
- B. Study (7:00 to 8:00).
Several courses offered to meet the various needs of the people. A brief intermission to move from classes into prayer room.
- C. Prayer and Fellowship (8:00 to 9:00).
Praise and prayers.
Scripture exposition by pastor.
Open period for testimonies, questions and announcements.
Hymn and benediction.

4. *Suggested Programs for Family Worship and Bible Reading*

- A. Materials available are: The Bible; Devotional Guides; Upper Room; Daily Readings in Sunday School Quarters; and Church Periodicals; Scripture Text Calendars; Radio Programs; Pictures and Memory Hymns.
- B. Time of family devotions—immediately before breakfast or immediately after or at the supper table and bedtime.
- C. Three programs suggested.
 - (1) Time—just before breakfast.
 - Quiet music.
 - Each member of family take a Bible and read passage, verse by verse, each taking his turn.
 - Each person point out verse that impressed him for the day.
 - One parent lead in extemporaneous prayer. Children should form habit of leading in prayer in turn or once a week.
 - A verse of memory song.
 - Lord's Prayer in unison.
 - Other parent give thanks at breakfast table.
 - (2) Time—before retiring. Primary and Beginner's children in home.
 - A verse of familiar children's hymn or chorus.
 - Scripture memory verses by all in turn or a psalm in unison.
 - A brief understandable Bible story told by a parent.
 - Prayers.
 - Good night song.
 - (3) Time—around supper table
 - Grace before meal.
 - The supper ended.
 - A verse of memory hymn that fits into season of year and that particular day.
 - Daily reading from Upper Room or other daily meditations.
 - Prayers of gratitude and intercession.
 - Quiet music. Brief prayer for protection and rest.

5. *Suggested Program for the Sunday School*

- A. Organization
 - (1) Unity of Program.
 - (2) Budget.

- (3) Group of Workers.
- (4) Training of Workers.
- (5) Administrative Management of pupils.
- (6) The session.
- (7) Records and reports.
- (8) Outside Relationships.

B. Pastor's Work

- (1) He is the directing head of all the educational work of the church.
- (2) A teaching Ministry.
- (3) Pastor should attend Sunday School regularly.
- (4) He may teach a Sunday School class.
- (5) He should cooperate in forming and directing the policies of the Sunday School.
- (6) Help secure workers and carry out a Leadership Training program.
- (7) Be the leader in Sunday School Evangelism.
- (8) Recognize his opportunities for Bible Study and Preaching.
- (9) His opportunities for Missionary instruction.
- (10) Active enlistment of Sunday School members.
- (11) Relate the Sunday School more closely to the church.

C. Officers' Duties

- (1) The Sunday School Superintendent
 - (a) Keep the Sunday School thoroughly organized.
 - (b) Maintain a high grade of teaching.
 - (c) Be a soul winner.
 - (d) Attend worship services regularly.
 - (e) Plan the Sunday morning program of the Sunday School and carry it out.
 - (f) See that the Standard of Efficiency is maintained.
 - (g) See that the School is properly equipped.
 - (h) Keep the school informed about the work of the denomination.
 - (i) Plan a Daily Vacation Bible School.
- (2) Secretary
 - (a) Order literature.
 - (b) Care for the literature.
 - (c) Keep records.
- (3) The Treasurer
 - (a) Receive and disburse all Sunday School funds.
 - (b) Educate the Sunday School in Missions.

- (4) The Librarian
 - (a) Build the library with funds provided by the church.
 - (b) Operate the library.
 - (c) Get the books read.
- (5) Chorister and Accompanist
 - (a) Select a good instrument and keep it in tune.
 - (b) Select a good hymn book.
 - (c) A good accompanist.
 - (d) A good song leader.

D. Duties of Teachers

- (1) Familiarize themselves with the course of study and prepare regularly for each session.
- (2) Acquaint themselves with the interests and needs of pupils.
- (3) Pray.
- (4) Worship regularly.
- (5) Be church members.
- (6) Pay to church.
- (7) Show interest in social work of community.

6. *Suggested Programs for Young People's Work (Christian Endeavor)*

A. Officers and their duties

- (1) President
 - (a) Presides at business meetings of society.
 - (b) Chairman of Executive Committee.
 - (c) Is responsible for a definite program of work being definitely carried out.
 - (d) A member ex-officio of all committees.
 - (e) Is responsible for a correct mailing list being sent to the Director of Young People's work and the General Board of Christian Education.
- (2) Vice President
 - (a) Cooperates with the President in making and executing the plans of the society.
 - (b) Performs the duties of the President in his absence.
- (3) Secretary
 - (a) Keeps an accurate record of the members and their addresses, activities of the society, minutes of business meetings, minutes of executive committee, and reports of various committees.
 - (b) Corresponds with all outside agencies.

- (4) Treasurer
 - (a) Pays out all such monies as authorized by the society.
 - (b) Renders an accurate financial statement at all business meetings, Official Board and Quarterly Conference.
- (5) Director of Christian Education as an advisory officer of the Society
- (6) Committees
 - (a) Lookout.
 - (b) Devotional.
 - (c) Social.
 - (d) Missionary.

B. Order of service

- (1) Plan One
 - Devotional meditations.
 - Leader's approach to topic.
 - Short talks.
 - Outstanding truths.
 - Illustrations.
 - Question period.
 - Quiet music.
 - Mizpah.
- (2) Plan two
 - Group singing.
 - Daily Readings.
 - Prayers.
 - Special music.
 - Topic presented.
 - Short talks.
 - Illustrations.
 - Hymn.
 - Benediction.

C. Business and Social Meetings

- (1) Monthly business meetings.
- (2) Special meetings called by the President.
- (3) Social gatherings held at times and places as arranged by the Social Committee.
- (4) Whenever feasible, social events should be for all Young People of the church, under the leadership of the Director of Young People's work.

7. *Suggested Program for Vacation Bible School*

A. Elements of the daily program

- (1) Procession—directed activities
- (2) Processional march

- (3) Worship program (three separate groups)
 - (a) Appropriate hymns.
 - (b) Scripture verses.
 - (c) Prayer.
 - (d) School motto.
 - (e) Missionary offering.
- (4) Music—choice hymns
- (5) Flag and Bible salutes and Pledges
- (6) Graded stories and story telling
- (7) Suggested expressional activities
 - (a) Dramatizing stories.
 - (b) Projects of purposeful activities.
 - (c) Poster making.
 - (d) Educational games.
 - (e) Memory work and drills.
 - (f) Notebook period.
 - (g) Surprise and extra features.
 - (h) Pictures and art.
 - (i) Handwork.
- (8) Recreation
- (9) Closing period
(Reference materials, "The Vacation Bible School Guide," by Homer L. Grice.)

8. *The Pastor's Office or Study*

A. Equipment

- (1) A flat top desk with accessories
- (2) A swivel desk chair
- (3) Two side chairs with arms (not rockers)
- (4) Bookcases, filing cabinet and a card file
- (5) A typewriter and desk, mimeograph or duplicator
- (6) Telephone, clock and calendar
- (7) Rugs on floor and pictures on walls

B. Files and records

- (1) Variety of files—box, drawers, vertical, cards, etc.
- (2) Plans for filing materials depends on needs, habits and methods
- (3) Methods
 - (a) Alphabetical.
 - (b) Subject.
 - (c) Chronological.

C. Correspondence

- (1) Various kinds of letters
- (2) Answer all mail promptly
- (3) Be natural. Letter writing is an opportunity to release personality.

9. *Duties of Church Officers and Workers*

A. Regular officials of the local church

- (1) Class Leaders
- (2) Financial Secretary
- (3) Church Treasurer
- (4) Benevolence Treasurer
- (5) Stewards
- (6) W. M. A. President and Treasurer
- (7) Otterbein Guild President and Treasurer
- (8) Woman's Aid President and Treasurer
- (9) Brotherhood President and Treasurer
- (10) General Director of Christian Education
- (11) Church and Parsonage Boards of Trustees
(For detailed duties of each official, see "Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.")

B. Sexton

(1) Buildings

(Ventilation, dusting, sweeping, arrange furniture for regular and special occasions, ring bell, operate heating plant, dispose of garbage, make minor repairs, and do painting. He should appear neat and well dressed, at public services, unlock doors for all meetings, oil everything that squeaks, wash windows, keep clocks wound and regulated, arrange hymn books, etc.)

(2) Grounds

(Care of lawn, clear yard of rubbish, keep sidewalks clear and clean, keep bulletin board up-to-date, raise and lower flag on special days)

C. Special Committees (for special tasks and occasions)

- (1) Program
- (2) Reception
- (3) Building
- (4) Finance
- (5) Invitation
- (6) Entertainment
- (7) Transportation
Etc.

D. Duties of Church Members

- (1) Use the means of Grace
- (2) Have family worship
- (3) Love the brethren

- (4) Sabbath observance
- (5) Obedience to Government
- (6) Encourage youth of church and community
- (7) Practice Christian Stewardship
- (8) Support the Gospel
- (9) Receive Ministers sent by Conference
- (10) Care of poor
- (11) Nonconformity to world
- (12) Promote union among ourselves

10. *Suggested Programs for Rural Recreation*

(Little has been done in building rural recreation programs. This is an uncharted sea. The idea is to get the whole church to play. First, survey the community to determine its recreational needs.)

A. Children

Simple games, under competent supervision, can be played on church lawns, in groves, fields, church basements and school gymnasiums.

B. Juniors

- (1) Project recreation. 4-H Clubs, poultry, pig and calf clubs, etc.
- (2) Camping. Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, etc.
- (3) Outdoor games
- (4) Indoor games

C. Young People.

- (1) Outdoor games. Baseball, tennis, basketball on courts, volleyball, etc.
- (2) Indoor games. Various kinds as can be played in Parish houses and gymnasiums.
- (3) Project recreation. Caring for flower beds on church lawns, providing shrubbery, help build recreational programs and direct them.

D. Adults

- (1) Organization activities. Class meetings, church dinners, reunions, frolics, Home comings, Brotherhood meetings, Sunday School picnics and Jubilees.
- (2) Games. Handball, horseshoe, soft ball, croquet, etc.

(See chapter 8, "Recreation and Rural Youth")

Rural Life Sunday

A well-planned observance of rural life Sunday will create and foster a deeper spirit of rural mindedness, and inspire Christian ideals and leadership in our rural sections. The following suggestions have been approved by the Home Missions Council representing twenty-eight denominations: First, that constituent denominations observe wherever possible, the fifth Sunday after Easter as a special Rural Life Sunday. This is to be done in such a way, and by such means, as the church organization and local conditions permit. Second, that prayers be offered not only for the fruits of the soil, but also for the Husbandman himself. In Virginia, the Rural Church Conference Board requested the rural churches of all denominations to make May the Rural Church Month and celebrate sometime during the month, a Rural Church Sunday. The Catholics and Episcopalians have long since observed Rogation Sunday in their rural churches.

Mothers' Day could be profitably chosen as a home-coming time for all those who have left the rural church. A white flower could be worn in honor of mother and a floral tribute placed on her grave. Rally Day could be observed in the Sunday School with the slogan, "Every child in the countryside present." The best time for church work in the country is in the spring and summer, and a special effort should be made to enlist a full attendance and start a program of advance in the springtime.

The morning worship services should be well-planned, the church appropriately decorated, a sermon delivered on the home, a carefully prepared history on the local church read, and a time given for reminiscent testimony.

At noon a dinner should be served in the basement of the church, or if thought best, on the church grounds, with a social hour following. The home-comers and friends will want to visit and should not be denied that privilege.

The two o'clock afternoon services should contain a strong address on, "The Country Church." Our country people need to be stimulated to the importance and dignity of their task, and to overcome some of their inferiority complexes.

Such occasions not only have to do with the past, but the present and the future. Most rural people need to catch a vision of the work of the future. Dan Crawford said, "Hats off to the past, coats off to the future." He had given most of his useful life to Africa. The afternoon address should be a challenge to a great task. The afternoon program should be closed by a pageant, put on by the young people of the church and community, entitled "Along the Highway of the King." It will furnish a fit closing and a harmonious pledge for devotion to the unfinished task of the rural church.

These suggestions have been taken largely from H. W. McLaughlin's book, "The Country Church and Public Affairs"—p. 249.

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